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IN DESERT GERMANY
By V. S. Pritchett

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THE REICH IN CHAOS

THE Wehrmacht is on the brink of irrevocable defeat. On newspaper maps of the Western Front the black arrows of Allied armour plunge, almost unchecked, deeper and deeper into Germany. On the left, the Canadian Army is nearing the Zuider Zee, isolating the German garrison remaining in Western Holland; in the centre, British and American forces are beyond the Weser, leaving behind them the remnants of some fifteen enemy devisions encircled in the Ruhr; and, on the right, while General Patton's tank divisions sweep on through Erfurt in the direction of Leipzig, American and French forces are advancing for the invasion of Bavaria. For the German High Command this is rout; and on the Austrian Front, where Marshal Tolbukhin's Armies are enveloping Vienna, there are similar signs of the disintegration of enemy defences.

It is idle yet to speculate when large-scale organised resistance will be finally overcome. There are still very considerable enemy forces intact in Brandenberg and Saxony; in Westphalia the 1st Paratroop Army has still to be reckoned with; and on both fronts S.S. formations will doubtless make desperate efforts to gain time for the withdrawal of "last-stand" elements into the mountain areas of the South. How far they can succeed will depend on how quickly Marshals Zhukov and Koniev can strike westwards and how soon a junction between the Americans and the Russians can be effected in the vital triangle of Leipzig, Chemnitz and Dresden.

What is already certain is that a machine, geared to war as no other State of similar size and complexity has been, is breaking up. In this defeat of Hitler's Reich there is a strange quality of shapelessness. It is not only that pockets, large and small, of armed enemy forces still remain to be subdued in Courland, Norway and Italy, on the French coast, and in Holland, whose liberation may yet be accompanied by grievous destruction of ports and dykes. It is not only that, in a chaos of broken communications, isolated German units are offering fierce resistance, while others are surrendering or melting away. The picture given by reports from war correspondents is one of a Reich in chaos. Disrupted railways, towns reduced by air bombardment to heaps of rubble; here and there sniping by a few young hooligans in response to Goebbels' "werewolf" appeal; areas where civilians are disarming their own troops to end bloodshed; the mass of the population stunned, bewildered and near hysteria—with looting of wine-cellars, flowers and kisses for the victorious Allied troops, sullen apathy and stoic resignation the discrepant ingredients of defeat.

Above all, as General Eisenhower has already reminded the German people, there looms the grim problem of food. Already there are reports of bread riots in Berlin and Saxony, and correspondents write of the mass trek homewards of thousands of foreign land-workers, leaving unfinished the spring sowing on farms whose produce alone stands between Germany and starvation next winter. The defeat of the German Armies in the field is the first chapter only of Allied victory. Next will come the mopping-up of a "nuisance" resistance whose extent cannot yet be measured. Last, and ultimately most important of all for the world's future, will be the task of averting economic and social anarchy in the vacuum created by the overthrow of Hitler's Order.

The Future of Austria

With the Red Army at the Gates of Vienna, the time has come for consideration of the future of Austria. The views of the Austrians are relevant. Do they desire independence from Germany? Perhaps the most striking evidence of such a desire may be found in the recent proceedings of the People's Court at Linz against a group of 18 Austrian "Separatists," of whom eight were sentenced to death. This trial, known in Austria as the "Freistadt" case, bears out previous information about the existence of a united Austrian Resistance comprising, according to the Nazi press, "Monarchist, Marxist and Bolshevik organisations." An Austrian Socialist, who was in Austria until a few weeks ago, claims that the all-party resistance group is widely known as "O5," the Austrian equivalent of French Maquis or Russian partisans. Having no arms, its activities are strictly limited. It seems, however, that the Austrian Catholic Party has found some young, democratic leaders who are able to see eye to eye with the Left. A Provisional National Committee is said to have been set up in Austria and to have proclaimed a programme embracing *inter alia* the nationalisation of some of the Austrian key industries. Fritz Mandl, one of the least reputable of Austria's armament magnates, has just been reported arrested in the Argentine. It was Mandl whose fear of the Social Democrats made him spend money lavishly on the Black Heimwehr of Prince Starhemberg as well as on the Nazis, thereby paving the way for the bloody repression of the Austrian Social Democrats in 1934. Austria's future is likely to be a test-case for Allied co-operation, as indeed it was after the last war. It is sincerely to be hoped that Allied statesmanship this time will prove more equal to the task, especially in the economic sphere. As for the Austrians, we must hope that Austrian Resistance is genuinely based on a progressive political and social programme, and not only on a mere negative reaction to Nazi oppression, taking the form of violent nationalism and race hatred of the Germans.

New Czech Government

Dr. Benes returns home with a Government enlarged by the Czech Communist leaders from Moscow and representatives of the Slovak National Council. The new Government is quite obviously the result of a political compromise between Communists and non-Communists. Fierlinger, the new Premier, is, unlike his veteran Catholic predecessor, a comparatively young and forceful personality. He is known to be on the best of terms with both the Soviet Government and the Czech Communists, and made it clear that he has very definite ideas about the reshaping of the future Czechoslovakia. Being a Social Democrat, he was acceptable to Dr. Benes, and being in favour of an amalgamation of Social Democrats and Communists, a development which has already taken place in Slovakia, he was readily acknowledged by the

Communists. There are 15 Czechs and 10 Slovaks in the new Government. Ruthenia is not represented. The most important change in the composition of the Government is the inclusion of Communists, who take over (among others) Interior and War. These two Ministries have been traditional strongholds of the Czech Agrarians. Masaryk (non-political) remains Foreign Minister; Clementis, a Slovak Communist, has been appointed his Under-Secretary. Ripka, Masaryk's former associate in the Foreign Ministry, becomes Minister of Foreign Trade. The right-wing parties are represented by the Czech Catholics and the Slovak Democrats, one of whose leaders holds the important post of Finance. Compared with pre-war conditions, the Right has been weakened by the necessary exclusion from the "National Front" of the Czech Agrarians and Slovak Catholics. On the other hand, the Left is strengthened by the Communists, who before the war polled about one-tenth of the vote. It is generally expected that after the war the Communists will emerge as the strongest single party. How soon it will be possible in liberated Czechoslovakia to hold general elections and set up a regular government, will to a very large extent depend on the economic situation. Recent reports from Slovakia speak of grave supply difficulties and epidemics.

The Far East War

Overshadowed by the dramatic developments in the European theatre of war, the successful U.S. landing, just before Easter, on Okinawa Island has great strategic significance; and the meagre Japanese resistance so far offered is surprising. The island has several airfields (two of which have already been captured by the American forces), and its situation—equidistant about 300 miles from the south-west corner of Japan, the mainland coast of China and the north-east tip of Formosa—will enable the U.S. Air Force not merely to carry out fighter-escorted bombing attacks against Japanese cities, but also to command the East China Sea. Enemy contact between Japan and the Co-Prosperity Sphere in the South-West Pacific, Malaya and Burma is now confined to the single land route from China through Siam. This, however, does not mean that the Japanese are likely to abandon readily their conquered territories. In the Philippines, though major resistance has now been overcome, the process of mopping-up is likely to be lengthy and arduous. In Burma the Japanese forces situated round Mandalay have apparently avoided encirclement, and are probably concentrating on a new defence line running from the oilfields at Yenanyaung to Taunggyi. There is prospect of heavy fighting still in Central Burma before the road to Rangoon is opened.

Labour's Economic Programme

Mr. Herbert Morrison, outlining the Labour Party's programme at East Lewisham, made it plain that the Labour election policy will include only a comparatively modest instalment of socialisation. He mentioned electricity, gas, coal-mining and inland transport as the services to which public ownership ought to be immediately applied, and stressed the necessity of protecting small industries and businesses against "anti-social control exercised by monopolies, rings and cartels," which he proposed should be made subject "to an appropriate degree of public supervision and accountability for the purpose of preventing them from acting against the public interest." We hope that, well before the election, the Labour Party will do something to make more precise the methods by which it proposes to attempt the desired control of monopoly practices. The merely negative policy of trying to prevent such practices altogether clearly will not work. It is of no use to attempt to outlaw monopoly in face of technological conditions which urge private enterprise continually and imperatively towards it. If industries which lend themselves easily to monopoly are to be left under private ownership—as we agree some of them must be for some time yet—there must be devised a form of public control which will permit and encourage business co-operation in such matters as research, standardisation and the production of "utility" types, while firmly disallowing restrictive practices designed to limit total output or to hold prices at unreasonably high levels.

The Government and Monopolies

The pre-Easter debate on monopolies elicited little enough from the Government. Lord Woolton merely hinted that, when legislation did come to be drafted, there would possibly be some sort of tribunal or court of inquiry to which aggrieved parties could appeal. He did not say when such legislation was likely to be in draft, or give any sign that the Government considers the matter one of any urgency. Last year's White Paper on Employment Policy was similarly vague, but did at least suggest that the Government was thinking of undertaking an investigation. Apparently nothing has been done about it, or is meant to be done this side of the General Election. Accordingly, trade associations, cartels and planners for profit of all sorts will be quite free to make their plans for a resumption of their "regulative" functions whenever any war control is allowed to lapse, with the assurance that nothing is likely to be done to restrain them for a nice long time to come. We feel no surprise at this; for we were never disposed to take the *obiter dicta* of the Employment White Paper very seriously. Indeed, with the solitary exception of the clauses in Dr. Dalton's Bill relating to the Development Areas, there is no sign of anything being done to prepare for putting any part of the White Paper into effect. Presumably the argument is that unemployment is not likely to come back for some years yet, and that there is no need to hurry. But monopoly exploitation does not thrive only when trade is bad. The need is to prevent monopoly from entrenching itself anew under the slogan of freedom from State control.

What the Trade Unions Want

The Trades Union Congress General Council have appealed to the Labour Party to make the question of amending the Trade Unions Act of 1927 an issue at the General Election. Rather surprisingly, the Council does not appear to be demanding at this stage the repeal of the Act, or even extensive changes in it. The appeal is limited directly to the two matters in respect of which Congress previously asked Mr. Churchill to agree to compromise amendments during the war—the right of the Civil Service Trade Unions to resume their affiliation to Congress and the right of municipal bodies to make membership of a Trade Union a condition of employment. There are, of course, in the Act as it stands many things besides those to which the Trade Unions take objection—the ambiguous definition of unlawful strikes, the impossibly wide definition of intimidation, the restrictions on picketing, the terms of "contracting-in" to the political funds, and so on. A Labour Government, it is to be supposed, would, in fact, set out to modify many clauses of the Act, even if it did not go the length of entire repeal; but the Trades Union Congress apparently thinks it best to confine the immediate issue to the two points on which it had hopes of getting agreed amendments from the present Government. The Trades Union Congress simultaneously announced that it has been considering with its affiliated bodies the question of the continuance of certain parts of the emergency legislation governing labour conditions, and that the Unions in general desire to retain the guaranteed week, the right of appeal against dismissals and the improved welfare provisions which have been enforced in the larger factories during the war. On the other hand, they wish to sweep away all regulations which make it possible to impose fines or imprisonment "a soon as possible after the cessation of hostiliti with Germany."

The Doctors' New Plan

The Ministry of Health has made haste t deny rumours that the Government has given i to the doctors over the organisation of the proposed National Health Service, or that the plan which are understood to have been drafted by predominantly medical committee as an alternative to those set out in the White Paper hav received the Government's approval. The ne draft, says an obviously inspired notice in th press, is not the Government's, and has receive no official approval. It has still to be seen whethe it is generally supported by the medical profession: if it turns out that it is, the Governmen will have to consider how far it can be made square with the essential principles of the scheme that were set out in the White Paper. This mildly reassuring as far as it goes; but it does n go very far, or suggest that the Government likely to show great courage in standing up to th doctors when the time comes. Most of all is to be feared that, even if the Government maintains its view that the new service must be theoretically open to the whole population, irrespective of income, there will be a bartering of th insistence against the Health Centres' aspect the original plan. No doubt, the doctors theory favour Health Centres; but too many them want to make them merely places fro which a number of doctors will carry on the separate practices rather than centres of re grouped practice and community service. Th national scheme will not work unless it is suc that the great majority of those above the prese insurance limits will, in fact, make use of it, an unless, accordingly, private paying patien dwindle away for most doctors to a quite negl gible number. But this is precisely what a larg number of the older private practitioners are determined to prevent.

School Fees Have Not Gone Yet

The "direct grant" schools—that is, th intermediate group between those maintaine or aided by the Local Authorities and tho which receive no help from public funds—a to be allowed to continue to charge fees for least 50 per cent. of their pupils. They will hav each year to reserve at least a quarter of the available places for boys (or girls) comin from the primary schools; and they may b called on to reserve another quarter when th Local Authority demands this on the groun that it has not enough secondary school plac available elsewhere. When fees are charge they will be subject to approval by the Minist of Education, and will be reduced or remitte for parents of small means. Some of th "direct grant" schools will doubtless welcom this change; but others object strongly, and few may try to resume full independence at th cost of renouncing grant. On the other hand, number of the schools at present aided by th Local Authorities will undoubtedly try turn themselves into "direct grant" schools order to be able to go on charging fees; and good deal will depend on the line taken by th Ministry in dealing with such applications. would be most unfortunate if the abolition fees in the aided secondary schools were allow to be defeated in a number of areas by the tran ference of the more prosperous "aided" scho to the "direct grant" list, and of the mo snobbish "direct grant" schools to the "i spected but not aided" category, to which ma of the "public schools" belong. The attem to legislate for secondary education without eith touching the independent "public schools" laying down any principles governing admissi to the "direct grant" list was bound to set the educational snobs in the country hard at wo

PARLIAMENT : Statesmen's Farewell

It was the Lloyd George obituary symposium rather than the debate on European food relief—though that was not unworthy of its subject—which provided the highest human interest of the week before Easter. The Prime Minister dwelt on his great predecessor's achievements as a social reformer rather than as war leader; by common consent, the two most moving contributions were Aneurin Bevan's—and Gallacher's.

Winterton initiated the food-for-Europe debate with his customary majestic and punctilious clarity, and made, as Grigg said in winding-up, a "sombre and formidable" case. Not one speaker lightened the gravity of the picture (though Attlee scored a debating-point off Miss Rathbone, who begged that individuals here be allowed to send food to friends in France, by reminding her that she had sternly condemned individual food-parcels from Americans to Britons). Most of the speakers hinted obliquely, or said outright, that it was up to the Americans to do more. A Tory, Major Taylor, did not shrink from the embarrassment of describing in detail the luscious meals which had lately been served him in American messes in France—*and served by French civilians.* Grigg avoided giving a detailed reply by assuming (mistakenly) that he had half-an-hour less left than he really had. He gave a semi-encouraging answer to A. P. Herbert's eloquent plea for a civilian food fleet of little ships, on Dunkirk lines; and skated over Sir Arthur Salter's substantial criticisms of the limitations on the use of U.N.R.R.A. "We cannot escape," he ended, grimly, "the horrible conclusion that, in the months immediately ahead of us, millions of people will go hungry and great numbers will suffer deep privation."

On Maundy Thursday a question was asked for the first time about the artificial insemination of women. Willink, stalling rather feebly, doubted if he had power to find out about this and was unaware that there had been any births in this country. Members, some of whom knew that at least three such births had been announced in *The Lancet*, were dissatisfied with this casual dismissal of an important social issue.

A powerful Scottish all-party and all-wing conspiracy failed to persuade Cripps to promise that Prestwick should be the permanent metropolis of flying. However, the attack was somewhat deflated when he disclosed a handsome offer made to Scottish industry some time before but not yet taken up. Other eve-of-holiday subjects were the domestic distribution of coal, the right (now fully established) of Naval ratings to raise grievances through their M.P.s, and the distressing floods at Pontyates, Carmarthenshire.

The House reassembles (unless summoned back sooner) on Tuesday, April 10th, at 2.15 p.m.

Pontifex Minor

SHOULD SAN FRANCISCO BE POSTPONED ?

April 25th has proved an awkward date for the Conference of the United Nations at San Francisco, and various arguments for postponement have been put forward. The war against Germany is already crashing towards its end, and the most urgent problems will be demanding the attention of the principal Allied statesmen in Europe. What liberty of mind, it will be asked, will the Governments possess to ponder the long-range matters of principle involved in the creation of a permanent Security Organisation? The Russians, it seems, are so busy that they cannot spare Mr. Molotov for San Francisco, nor have they chosen a substitute of comparable prestige: Mr. Litvinov, for instance, or Mr. Maisky. They probably argue that there is no reason for haste; that many of the discussions will be passed over to committees, and that their leading spokesmen will only be needed at a later stage. Further, Russia holds that political agreement between the Great Powers before the Conference is necessary if good results are to be obtained.

Of these political matters the most important is Poland, which is still without a government which the Allies can agree to recognise. Poland ought to sit in this conference from the start, but as yet she has no government that can fairly claim to speak for her. This is the extreme instance of the lack of mandates that will in varying degrees disqualify every delegation at this meeting. Not one of the United Nations, with the single exception of the United States, has a government that can claim any direct authority to deal with the immense issues of principle that will be raised at San Francisco. That is true even of our own country, and it applies more obviously still to France and the rest of Continental Europe. The new Europe, it is argued, that finds a voice, after five years of silence, may ask for some form of organisation appreciably more democratic and more organic than the draft composed by the Big Three at Dumbarton Oaks. When this younger generation, formed in the movements of resistance, finds itself in control, it may be readier than our Elder Statesmen were to shed the old-world fetishes of national sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency.

As against these arguments we must range a series of other powerful considerations. If there is a risk of protracted and inconclusive debate, are there not greater risks in indefinite postponement? Not to hold the Conference on April 25th would lead people all over the world to fear that everything is being hatched behind the scenes by the Big Three, or alternatively that the project for a World Organisation was being shelved. Further, are not the dangers of disagreement at San Francisco greatly exaggerated? It is, after all, many years since a world public was able to make itself heard, and most of the subjects of disagreement are the legitimate and proper topics for world debate. Mr. Stettinius has supported the Russian claim that the Ukraine and White Russia should have separate votes in the Assembly, and has waived any United States claim for more than one vote. Russia should put her case democratically before the Conference, where other nations are able to express their views. If, as we should urge, the Assembly is made into an important body, representing Parliaments rather than governments, the Russian proposal has far-reaching implications and should be publicly discussed. Again, the Franco-Soviet view that bilateral treaties can operate automatically within the framework of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals is a proper matter for general discussion. Finally, the problem of voting and the issue, raised particularly by Canada, of the rights of the medium-sized States, and the relations of the small States to the great, must be openly debated; and if a long time is taken in argument, why not? Finally, on the crucial issue of Poland, we should say that it is more likely to be quickly settled if there is an urgent dateline in front of the Powers than if it is allowed indefinitely to drift on.

Our conclusion is that at this date it is a mistake to expect the type of conference originally envisaged, in which all the essentials have been agreed beforehand so that a draft constitution could be worked out within a few weeks, to be presented for ratification to the popular assemblies of the various countries. No time must be lost in tackling the immense problems involved in the reconstruction of a devastated Continent and in setting up economic agencies to tackle the practical problems of world economic reorganisation. But Europe's immediate problems are no reason for postponing San Francisco. The Conference may last longer than was expected; the small and middling Powers will have more to say, and decisions may be more difficult to reach. It is likely to prove an interim rather than a final conference. But debate on the whole post-war structure of the world must have a beginning, even if its final conclusion is distant. Its start has been announced for April 25th. It is best to adhere to that programme.

COAL: THE TECHNICIANS' REPORT

The Report of the Technical Advisory Committee on Coal Mining which has just been submitted to the Minister of Fuel and Power is not easy reading: nor is anything done by its authors to press its implications home. Probably they are all, by predilection or by principle, hostile to public ownership; for all of them are directors or leading officials of large colliery concerns. They are, in fact, a body of professional mining engineers; and, because the profession of consultant mining engineer practically does not exist in this country, they are all salaried men working each for his own colliery group. They are at pains to explain, at the beginning of their Report, that they make it as professional mining engineers, and not as representing the concerns from which they draw their incomes.

No one, after studying what they have to say, can resist the conclusion that there are only two possible ways of enabling the British coal mines either to compete efficiently in world markets or to provide coal at costs which will enable other industries to compete. One way is unification under private ownership into large regional combines integrated in turn under a general authority armed with wide powers; the other is public ownership. The authors of the Report appear, not unnaturally, to incline to the first alternative; but, reading between the lines, one gets the impression that even they are not quite happy about it. At all events, they make it perfectly plain that nothing short of a drastic regional integration of ownership, combined with a national planning of the industry over a long period and the expenditure on it of a very large amount of capital, can possibly enable it to yield either fair conditions to the miners or a square deal to the consuming industries or the general public.

Technically, the indictment of existing mining practice in this country is overwhelmingly severe. In no single respect has the industry, even in most of its larger units, kept itself even tolerably up to date. No doubt, as the Report suggests, some of its present faults are due to a persistence in practices which were highly progressive when they were originally introduced—at a time when the British coal industry, thanks largely to its great natural advantages, led the world. Our seams were relatively level and even, whereas most of those in Continental Europe were sloping steeply and broken by serious faults. This at one time enabled us to get coal cheaply by driving roads through the coal itself, whereas much Continental mining has been based on driving level roads through the strata, irrespective of the slope of the coal measures. Consequently, it has been much easier abroad than here to apply mechanical haulage; and this is a vital point, since probably the greatest single cause of high cost in British mining is inefficient and expensive underground transport as the mines grow older and coal has to be got farther from the shaft. It is, the Report says, no uncommon thing for the miners' working day of 7½ hours to be reduced by bad transport conditions to as little as five hours at the coal face; and high output is also prevented by difficulties in getting the coal from the working place to the top of the pit. The Report lays even more stress on the need for improved haulage than in better ways of actually getting the coal—though these, too, are regarded as needing the most drastic overhaul.

Yet again, our pits are the wrong shape. This is not only a matter of overall capacity. It is also pointed out that surface owners, in their desire for quick royalty returns, have often let leases to several different colliery concerns for areas which ought to have been developed as single units; and it is made plain that the acquisition of the coal itself by the State has done little to improve matters because of the calamitous provision in the Coal Mines Act compelling the Coal Commission to leave existing leases (including many new ones negotiated just before it took over) to run their term. The Report declares roundly that in many cases valuable coal can be got out economically only if pits are amalgamated, so that the coal can be drawn from the most convenient shaft irrespective of present ownership, and so that carrier coal, left between pits under separate ownership, can be taken away.

The Report does not say how large the surviving units ought to be; but it is unequivocal that they should be pretty big, and that there should be planning of output and pooling of experience and experiment on a regional and also on a national scale. Can these results be secured under private ownership? Mr. Foot's recent plan was based on the assumption that they could, and that the British public would stand for what would be, in effect, a gigantic monopoly controlling the entire coal industry without accepting any sort of overriding control from the State. These mining engineers are clearly more doubtful. They deplore the colliery owners' past opposition to amalgamation; and they urge that full powers to enforce amalgamation into large units must be placed in the hands of a public authority. Beyond that they do not go; but it seems highly unlikely that in practice State control, pushed so far, could be stopped short at that point—if only for the reason that private concerns would be ill-placed for raising, in a capital market which will be subject to many competing demands, the big sums which will admittedly be needed for carrying through the technical reorganisation required to make the large amalgamated concerns thoroughly efficient.

The coal industry furnishes a good example of the problems which arise when technical development makes it necessary for an old industry, hitherto conducted by rule-of-thumb, to adopt scientific methods and a scientific attitude to its problems. Such industries as chemicals, rayon and electrical engineering have possessed this scientific attitude from the start: they are inherently scientific industries. Coal-mining, on the other hand, began by digging stuff out of holes in the ground, and has never, in Great Britain, really grown up. Most colliery concerns are not large enough to employ a proper scientific staff; and there are few good mining engineers, primarily because there are few jobs open to them. To change all this calls for an effort of which the present controlling personnel of the industry is entirely incapable. Even if, in theory, coal-mining could be efficiently organised by a gigantic private trust, it could never in practice be so organised by a trust made up of, or based upon, the existing colliery directors. That, in the last resort, is why public ownership is the only solution.

There is, however, a strong subsidiary reason. The required changes in mining practice will call for a revolutionary change in the organisation and in the numbers of the labour force. There will have to be new schemes of training for every type of worker, from manager to pit-boy; and there will have to be means, as the new methods come into operation, of shifting considerable numbers of redundant workers out of the mines and retraining them for other occupations. To attempt to get the mine-workers' hearty co-operation, under a private monopoly, for plans which mean dislodging considerable numbers of them and facing them with the fear of unemployment, would be mere folly. There would be no prospect at all of getting co-operation on such terms; and without the mine-workers' co-operation no plan of reorganisation, however technically perfect, can ever be made to work. Only the State could face such a problem: nor could even the State face it unless it were thoroughly committed to a policy of full employment and to a retraining scheme designed to bring about the greater mobility of labour which a successful policy of full employment connotes. On this score, too, public ownership is a *sine qua non* of efficient reorganisation. But reorganisation there must be, as this Report shows beyond a doubt, if British industry as a whole is to have a fair chance. The technical case for it is complete: the obstacles to be overcome are political.

IN DESERT GERMANY

It was a grey morning with intervals of weak rain and we drove towards Germany like ghosts, enclosed in the cab of a three-ton truck. We were doing 60 most of the time, whining round bends, jumping corners, hitting our heads when the road was rough. No one spoke, for no one could be heard unless he shouted, and it was too early in the morning to shout. Between Winchester and Wantage one had seen this kind of country, but here it was on a larger scale, and not so green, a hedgeless, rolling, park-like region with square camps of woodland set off military fashion from the road. There were beech woods with their red floors and the long, bearded parades of the victorious pine. And then we saw the first wounds: a branch stripped off an apple tree, the grass roughed up by mortar fire, the fantastic scroll of tank tracks like the ritual images made by primitive man. The litter of fighting began; torn paper in the turf and the ration tins thrown down. The war looked like Box Hill after a Bank Holiday, a picnic or paper chase that ended in a village with its roofs blown off and its rafters sticking up like fish bones.

After this, we followed a rearguard action. Strips of war were followed by strips of peace and by strips of war again. The wrecked car, the trackless tank lay where they had been annulled. We came to the small towns of the frontier where windows exist no more. For a few seconds it was pleasant to cross a wide blameless river and, beyond the sunken tugs and barges, to see it turn like a face going out of sight into the hills.

And then we were in Germany. There had been a first-across race here. A score of wrecked tanks pointed in random directions in the ditches and the woods. The summer villa and the rich man's country house were pocked by shell fire or split clean open. The white tapes of the engineers were fixed along the roadside and made sudden detours into field and coppice, as if some estate were for sale in lots. Little Keep-off-the-grass notices were posted. "Mines Cleared to Ditch," they said. What happened where the tapes ended? A countryside which hitherto seemed to be the victim, now became hostile and without innocence. "Stay in the truck," it said. "Do not get out on the road. It will burn you. Do not touch anything." The traveller's eye wanders naturally forward; in imagination one is already living miles ahead. But here the wandering instinct was checked and reversed: "Do not touch" seemed to be posted on notice boards all over that country.

The phrase sung all day in my ears. With its double echo a carpet-beating noise began over the hill tops and one had a first false impression that the rain clouds were dirtier in that direction because of the inconsequent guns. They were hammering up the "Do Not Touch" notice in the sky itself. Spotters flew up from the green flying strip, to drive the words home. We crawled into a slow convoy on a broken road, and were wedged in with another from the opposite direction. We crawled. We oozed like worms in the mud. We stopped. Heads stuck out of trucks and tanks, stupefied by the silence and no one said a word to break it. Two columns of men, their faces filmed with dry mud and dust, stared at one another from their vehicles like so many dust-choked ants. The movement of a pair of eyes was startling. That I chiefly remember and the deep cut lines bracketing the lips of the men in the tanks. They were coming back to rest. Then the gears of two convoys went in and we were jerked away.

I remember the sweet stench of the destroyed villages, pale German children jeering, cattle loose among the ruins, the peasants with pick and shovel digging a wide deep grave. There was a soldier cleaning his trousers on a box, too, oblivious of the uproar around him; and by his anti-aircraft gun sat another soldier wearing an opera hat and with bottles of wine standing beside his shell cases. We passed the batt under their nets—a park-like scene—and could hear the other guns punching ahead of and—not so pleasant—punching behind us, t Pom-Pom-Pom is an exact definition of sound. It is like a boxer's chest-blow that makes lungs ring, a deliberate sound, but unreasona in its intervals which cannot be guessed; and a air raids one does not care for guns which do aim at the sky. After one long bout our dri took my tin hat. "I've always wanted to to a British piss pot," he said. "Just to feel He put it on his knee and stroked it and went i helpless laughter as if it were tickling h "Jesus," he said, handing it back, "isn't wonderful!" I cannot explain this, except say that he had the collector's instinct and fr now on laughed out loud when he caught eye.

We had seen signposts to Saarbrücken, si posts to Bonn, Mannheim and even Mainz, chalked up on the walls the German wor "Better death than slavery." The prison began to trickle back, happy, I think, because th helmets had been taken from them and they w only the light forage caps which gave these th fair men a clownish and addle-headed air. now we came to the town which was destination.

It was a place about the size of Reading. Th days before, though it was nearly surrounded, Germans had occupied the town. They had b told to surrender or the town would be destroy They did not give in until it was too late. white flags sagged vainly on their poles from attic windows of the few surviving houses. have become connoisseurs of ruin in this w We have learned to distinguish between bombed, the shelled, the burned, the blast But in England we have never seen a town t has been killed, completely written off and ab doned, a place as empty as Pompeii, that has sour stench of a rubbish heap from one end to other, and where the only sound is the drip water from the broken roofs. Large areas of town were waves of chocolate rubble and in streets that remained the walls had bulged and roofs capsized. There can have been habitable houses left; no doors or windo remained; inside the houses one climbed— did not step—from room to room. Outside, wh it had been cleared for traffic, the rubble shovelled into embankments. From what was of one street, one looked into the ruins of next, and to streets beyond framed in fretwork of destruction. From the wreck of one building one listened to the drip water in the next. And this drip of water startling, piercing, and idiotic in its monoto A vacant field, an empty moorland, a desert, h with sounds, but a dead town is like the grave

For a long time one stands unable to mo Disgust furs the tongue and sours the stoma One does not pity the people of the town, does one hate them. One says, "They did to us," but one is left just staring.

The scene has gone beyond argument. T terrible thing is that one has no feeling at all. O is faced by the boredom of destruction; on stripped of every feeling, the humane and inhumane, and curiosity grows feeble. This negation. The mind and heart have got to be at the beginning again and learn all they kn once more. You peep over a window-sill, the disgusted body refuses to follow the eye i the affairs of its enemy. You are careful no let your coat touch the sill as you look inside. soldier passes the end of the street you step ba Then again you look. And then, it occurs you, the street is yours. Any street. house. You can have the lot. Climb over wreckage, dig out a motor bicycle. "Help with this goddam door, I've seen a box of t I want. Boys! wine glasses! What have got? Anything in there? Books? Wi Cameras? Some son of a bitch has been h before." You go in, your boots crunching glass; you climb gingerly into a bedroom.

ardrobe has fallen on to the bed. What awful ats the woman wore. Why only one evening hoe? There's her sewing. She left her hair-ins. She read *Tristan and Isolde.* She hoarded ace powder. Her child had a red engine. She did ot finish knitting the jumper. Climb out into he next door house. The fat is still in the frying-an. She hadn't washed the dishes. Photo-raphs and letters are thrown over the floor. Here are three S.S. men with fat girls on their nees, each one holding a wine glass and the sun hines on them. They were well fed, fatter eople than we are. And here is the priest's tudy. Christ points to his heart in dreadful hromo-lithograph and on the bookshelf beneath are all the anti-Jewish books and the Party iterature, an air-raid warden's helmet, the man's cattered correspondence, his stomach pills, his etter scales and—poor wretch—his contracep-ives. Open the trunk by his bed and there is his tore of forbidden literature: the Zweigs, Mann nd Alain Fournier. Really, these things tell ou nothing about people. They parody their wners. Do not touch: the words come back. You feel that you must not put a finger on these hings or that you must not displace them. It ould be fatal to put the cotton reel back in the rong drawer or move the child's train. Fear and onscience do not restrain you; it is that hesitation e at first feel in touching the property of the dead. Or perhaps you fear the contagion of calamity nd think every object leprous and unlucky and hat even the dust is tainted. You have re-urned to the forgotten habits of primitive magic nd you seek to avert the evil eye of that cheap Art Nouveau furniture which stares at the intruder nd seems to offer itself. Or can it be that even catastrophe, one wishes to save something, if nly the position of a cotton reel, for civilisation?

But against this, there is the fever. The Ger-ans themselves felt it before we did, for there re Nazi warnings against looting on the walls. Someone shouts: "Say, hold this goddam gun while I give this guy a hand." And the reply, "Aw, hell, what you going to do with that, nyways?" And then a car crawls by with a railer stacked with wine and its seats padded with edding. Our lieutenant says thoughtfully, "I ave a kinda dim suspicion that some unkind eople at a court-martial would say those guys ere liable for 25 years." "Aw, hell," says a G.I., "the Krauts stripped my whore's house in France before they left." And some said it was lousy principle and others that maybe she was lousy whore. But the M.P. controlling the raffic among the ruins of the main boulevard ter on called out, "Hiya fellers. How are you oing? I've got mine." He had four bottles f champagne by his motor bike. A couple of nks going by with mattresses and quilts tied on them rolled forward to the artillery duel outside he town.

For over the town's silence the guns went on eliberately. Ack-Ack opened up on a spotter. There was the feeble whimpering of shells. A G.I. tumbled off the bike he was learning to ride. "Feel kinda scared when I hear that," he said. "I hate the noise." We had two frights our-elves; the truck missed a pile of grenades by a w inches, and later in the afternoon there was a ounter-attack. But most of all, the stench aunted us, that damp, sweet odour of rot. I emember the backs of two sullen German women, e ridiculous hand-flappings of a drunk German aiter in his apron, tottering into the ruins of his otel with the cellar keys. And the one instance f fraternisation. There was a madman in this wn, a man with few teeth and a pasty, melan-holy head that wagged on his neck as though it ere on a spring. He wore a shabby suit; omeone had put a top-hat on him. He was being riven round on the bonnet of a Jeep and he sat here gazing at his knees and never looking up. They said there were two or three hundred Germans left somewhere; but those were the nly ones I saw and the nodding madman was the st. It must have been the supreme hour of a anic-depressive's life.

V. S. PRITCHETT

A LONDON DIARY

V-DAY, with its two Bank Holidays, will not be at all like Armistice Day, 1918. For one thing, very few people then had been expecting the war to end; one just couldn't believe it. It must have been on November 10th that I first heard that the Germans were suing for peace. I was in France, a very young man wearing a Red Cross (F.A.U.) uniform, and it happened that I started home on leave that day. I was in London on the 12th, and the celebrations resembled nothing that I have seen or heard of since. London was just carnival; not drunk with beer (I think the liquor soon gave out), but quite drunk with happiness. I remember best Trafalgar Square, where thousands of people were dancing on the pavements, singing, idiotically, "Oh, Oh, What a Rotten World!" and linking up and merry-making with other groups of people they had never met before and would never see again. A policeman, who was thought slightly officious, found himself surrounded by a cheery mob which joined hands and danced round him singing, "Ring-a-ring o' Roses." They took off his helmet and played catch with it. They boarded buses and made the drivers go anywhere that took their fancy. This time, I fancy, there will be more drink and hooliganism, and less spontaneous happiness. The Day will be "staged" and has been too long expected. And then, apart from the Burma-Looms-Ahead quip, everyone knows that the war won't be properly over even in Europe (they discuss "pockets of resistance" in the pub, and they know that demobilisation will take a long time and that things will be "very difficult after the war".) The more thoughtful people ask what victory means if the other side haven't surrendered, and argue about the food situation and what is coming of all this talk about a new World Organisation. But these are longer-distance thoughts. When V-Day does come, it will be a day of a wonderful release from tension. The killing in Europe will be over, or nearly over, and that, to millions of mothers and sweethearts and friends, is the supreme thing. It will mean the end of rockets, and no more black-out; most important of all, it will mean family reunions and a rest and a holiday. Not, as many thought last time, the assurance of a better epoch or anything of that kind, but a holiday, perhaps with those we love. In the world's present mood what could be better than that?

* * *

A glider had come down in a nearby field. An average kind of operational landing, I was told. A bit of the nose was stove in, otherwise it was intact, with no one hurt. Children climbed over it and the village came in relays to see what it was like inside. The R.A.F. men on guard sat on the floor of the glider and talked. They discussed their officers, and whether you met a higher proportion of officers without side, who were matey with their men, in the Army than you did in the R.A.F. Unemployment after demobilisation was the chief topic, and after that, housing; and then discussion centred on the case of a corporal who had been accepted as A1 at the beginning of the war, during service re-developed an earlier medical trouble, and was now graded C3. Had he got the right to a pension? It was decided that he had and would get it if he stood up for his rights. I asked whether there was any dominant political view amongst the men. Well, they agreed the majority were Left, but no one seemed sure how far Left or whether Left meant anything positive. They told me of discussion groups where you were allowed to talk pretty freely, but how it was "always worked" that the critics were pushed aside and a "Government view" stated at the end with the authority of the discussion leader. In the R.A.F., they said, if you were too Left, or even talked too Left at the discussion, you got posted at once. After all, most of them are far too young to have any very clear political views. There have been no politics during the war, and only National Government politics since 1931.

We may find that more of these young men than is now apparent have been thinking furiously about bombing, about war as an institution, and about how to end the bloody business for ever. Anyway, here is a famous Pathfinder, Donald Bennett, the youngest Air Vice-Marshal, writing a book (*Freedom from War.* Pilot Press, 3*s.* 6*d.*) in which he pleads for a World Executive and an international police force to prevent war. He has seen the full horrors of war's slaughter, and thinks the politicians, the intellectuals and the public as a whole cowardly or hesitating or blind, because there is no immediate and conclusive plan to end national sovereignties and substitute a world force for national armies, navies and air forces. I am not sure that he has read the literature on the subject or realised that many of us spent most of our lives between the two wars working, speaking or writing for just the very ends he now seems to think almost easily accomplished. I'd like to recommend him a few books. He says little of any of past proposals; nothing of national psychology—he proposes that the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and all the other countries should abolish their own forces and substitute a police force made of contingents based on a ratio of population and standard of living; nothing of the "secret international" of arms manufacturers. Not a word about the economic or political causes of war. No matter; the important thing is that an Air Vice-Marshal, soon possibly to be a Liberal M.P., has put himself on record in this way and, maybe, started a serious campaign in favour of over-riding national sovereignty.

* * *

If Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill had been able to stay another month at Yalta, and the principal Polish leaders had been there to confer with them, I have no doubt that the Polish constitutional problem would have been solved. As it was, they followed the ancient and dangerous plan of covering disagreement by an agreed formula. They were not at the moment compelled to test its meaning in terms of personalities. The formula said that the situation—

> calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of the western part of Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad.

The Soviet view is that this recognises the Lublin Poles as the nucleus of the new government, which is to be broadened by the inclusion of politicians from other democratic parties both inside and outside Poland. A most important step has already been taken in the right direction by the split in the Polish Socialist movement in this country and by the adherence to Lublin of a section of the resistance movement in Poland which used to take its orders from London. As for the second requirement—the inclusion of some of the London Poles—the U.S.S.R. is only prepared to accept those who are genuinely reconciled to the Yalta agreement and will not want again to start frontier disputes. On the other hand, the British seem to think that "re-organising" the Polish Government means a root and branch reconstruction of it. On the interpretation of the words the Russians seem to have the best of the argument.

* * *

By way of reinforcement, Lord Wavell has now been joined in London by Sir Francis Mudie, Home Member of the Government of India. Sir Francis, I am told, has been taking careful soundings of Indian opinion, and it is more than possible that Lord Wavell, after his full discussion with the responsible people in this country, is now in a position to put new constitutional proposals before the British Cabinet. Since no proposal stands any chance while the Congress leaders are in gaol, I look forward with some confidence to the release of Nehru and his colleagues in the near future and to a serious attempt to end the deadlock.

CRITIC

THE VILLAGE CHURCH

"THE blunt truth about the Church in not a few villages is that to all intents and purposes it is dead, and that in many more villages it is dying." That was written by Robertson Scott twenty years ago. It is certainly the fact now in the villages in which I have acquired an intimate knowledge. The Church simply does not exist as a religious and social influence in the common life. I do not generalise from the particular. I have myself known villages in which, almost always owing to the character of the priest, the Church is an actively useful institution, but my conviction that such villages are exceptional is confirmed by the far greater experience of Robertson Scott, by G. H. Gardiner, in his *The Village To-day*, and by other country observers.

Robertson Scott says that "very little of what is read, sung and said in the churches is now believed." I do not agree with this. The villagers who never go inside the church except for a baptism, a wedding, a funeral and the harvest festival would hotly deny that they are not Christians. They are, in fact, neither religious nor anti-religious, they are merely areligious. They have no conception that the Church can add to their lives anything of which they feel the need. With its spire, and particularly its graveyard, the church is the village ornament, much like the Sunday suit that is rarely worn even on Sundays. The villagers ask nothing from the Church as a living spiritual influence because they have no notion of anything it has to offer.

The impotence of the Church in the countryside is commonly ascribed to the deficiencies of the clergy, and I think this is largely true. For the most part, they are kindly, well-meaning men, anxious to serve their neighbours, whom they are generally incapable of understanding. They start with the heavy handicap of being regarded as belonging to the "gentry." The old-time squarson has disappeared with the old-time squire. But to-day the village priest, with his narrow means, has the same background and the same tastes as his well-to-do parishioners, and he is naturally inclined to be most concerned with the few folk who can add to the occasional enjoyments of his dull life.

Country livings are too often regarded by bishops and lay patrons as pensions for missionaries or homes of rest for tired town incumbents, and the livings are given to men with no knowledge of the country, little appreciation of country life and the smallest capacity for creating unpatronising friendship. They are bad mixers, and, as I have written before, the village priest who would make a success of his cure must throw a good dart as well as preach a good sermon. If he wants the villagers to listen to him in the pulpit, he must first gossip with them in the inn. The Irish priest and the French *curé* belong to the people to whom they minister. The majority of English village clergy are numbered with the minority, whom the villagers regard with growing suspicion, and it takes a man of exceptional character to dissipate the suspicion.

Many rural vicars give it up as a bad job. They are bored by preaching to the same handful of the aged and the very young every Sunday. They realise that they do not count. They take refuge in their gardens and their libraries. Who can blame them?

The village needs leadership in play as in prayer. The most successful village priest whom I have known was the life and soul of every local activity. He was the president of the clubs, the M.C. at the dances and the whist drives, the chairman at every concert and an honorary member of the Workers' Union. He was never obtrusive. He never went where he was not wanted, for he was wanted everywhere. He was the crony of the village publican and the smiling admonisher of the village sinners.

But though the village priest may, all too obviously, not be the man for the job, it has to be remembered that he inherited an empty church and an indifferent people. I do not believe that the country workers as a whole have been willingly numbered among regular churchgoers at any time since the Reformation. As Cobbett has related, a hundred years ago they were sometimes bribed to go to church by a pious squire or threatened with the loss of their jobs by a pious farmer if they stayed away. Nowadays there is no such economic pressure, and, being free to use their Sundays as they will, the cottager and his wife do not go to church, where they are much more likely to be bored than to be edified.

The country gentry are generally very Low Church and, unless he is to have trouble with the most important members of his congregation, the village parson must be Low Church, too. Low Churchism, a very different thing from modern Liberal Evangelicalism, has its last strongholds in Little Puddleton and Cheltenham. It is the dullest and most completely unromantic form of religion ever devised by man. Whether it be Roman or Anglican, Catholicism is colourful and dramatic. Its divine authority is made evident by its human appeal. Popular Protestantism, too, with its call for conversion and its claim to establish direct contact between the humblest men and women and their Maker, definitely brings romance into drab lives. Low Churchism is respectable and sedate. The divine offices, beautiful and impressive in a cathedral, are deadly dull when rendered by a village choir. Old Prebendary Carlile once said that "you can't expect an old boozer to be interested in the Matins." Nor a hard-working villager nor any other simple man.

In the village church you must be respectful and quiet, but it is Popish to be reverent. The note of the service is suggested when the churchwarden clatters into the chancel with no sort of idea that the place on which he stands is holy ground, and I am always reminded of Laud's complaint: "It is called superstition nowadays for any man to come into a church with more reverence than a tinker and his dog into an ale house."

In France, in Italy and in Ireland the people are happily at home in church. In the English village they are uncomfortably on their best behaviour. To the Roman Catholic peasant, God is a father, with whom one may be reverently familiar. In the English village church He is the super-gent, the squire above the squire.

To be of any spiritual value, religion must be brought into close contact with secular experience, and this should be far easier in the countryside than in crowded cities. Seedtime and harvest, ploughing and thatching might all be the occasions for moving and appropriate religious festivals. The traditional observation of Lammas Sunday and Rogationtide is entirely neglected in most villages, and I am quite certain that the procession of priest and people round the parish boundaries, with stations for prayers and thanksgivings, and the reading of the Gospel for the day under the largest oak tree in the parish, would arouse immense interest and would help the villagers to understand that religion may have a living and romantic value.

Conrad Noel's Sunday morning service at Thaxted was a thing of perfect beauty and simplicity. Its perfection would be impossible in most village churches, but it is the model that might be copied from afar.

The incumbent who relegated Matins to its proper secondary place and invited his people to a simple act of easily understandable common worship would probably annoy the gentry, but the common people might follow him gladly.

Some village churches are very beautiful, and some are as ugly as Methodist conventicles. The inside of most of them is bare and colourless. The village church might be the common home, and to that end it must have the attraction of a home. The often garish ornaments and pictures in the cottages have their significance and their value. The church needs similar ornaments. It is possible to buy seemly religious pictures at a moderate price, but I would far rather see the crudities common on the Continent than the bare whitewashed walls of the English parish churche

If I were a village parson, I should have a por able stage made that could be placed before th chancel, and on it I should produce a nativi play at Christmas and a passion play at Easte I have discovered that villagers love acting, an there would be no difficulty in filling the cas though their training might be a trying busines I should arrange with the W.E.A. for lectures i church on winter Sunday afternoons. I shoul have frequent cinemas in church, carefully avoid ing the films that are lent by pious societies, an with the help of the C.E.M.A., I should on occ sion have a performance on a Sunday of re music by real musicians. Give the villager th chance to enjoy the best, and he will not fail i appreciation, and it is the business of the Churc to take all God's good gifts to the simple an the poor.

It is astounding to me that the Church seem placidly indifferent to the fact that it is dead i the countryside, and that it is still persuaded th it is alive and kicking. "It is essential that th Church should maintain the strong position whic it still holds in the rural community," one pu blind clergyman wrote in a book published ju before the war. In fact, it has no position wha ever to maintain, though it might contrive attain a position of beneficient influence if th problem were attacked in a realistic way by th right sort of men.

Rural parishes should be grouped and serv by three or four clergymen living together in som central locality. They should be young men wi a definite vocation for country work and a speci training for it. The combined incomes of th parishes would provide a decent life and the e pense of a motor or motor bikes for transpo With a slight alteration in the times of the se vices, under such a plan the many aspects parish activity could be performed far more ef ciently than they are now.

I am convinced that it is within the competen of the village church and the village priest to pl a leading part in supplying the sweetness and lig which village life so tragically needs, and wit out which an adequate and contented Englis rural population will never be attained. Leade ship is needed to make common life happy an pleasant; and in small communities capab leaders, not prevented by classism from friend contacts, are inevitably rare. That is the parso chance. He is ordained to be guide, philosoph and friend, not only in the village church, but the village hall, the village shop and the villa pub. He should be leader and organiser in pleasant social activities, not primarily to entice congregation to his Sunday services, but becau it is his job to help. The good village parson the trusted good companion.

SIDNEY DARK

THE SOLDIER

OUR ward was as bare and cold as a Methodi chapel; the aisle ran between the smart ran of beds up to the stained-glass window at t end. Blue angels, with red wings and spik haloes, floated upwards towards the Deity, W sat brooding on a crimson throne. About twen of us had wireless sets. From seven o'clock the morning until midnight the wireless was subdued but persistent choir which sang, pray coughed, gurgled and muttered.

At four o'clock the wireless sets gave thr piping little cheers, the swing doors opened, t new patients stood there, all dressed up wi haversacks and steel helmets humped on th backs. We looked forward to that moment. broke the monotony. At four o'clock, then, laid our heads tidily on the pillows and look at the swing doors.

Hulbert even arrived at a different time fr anybody else. He arrived at nine o'clock in t morning. Even from twenty feet away he look a monstrosity. His hands were red and the s of boxing gloves. His head was a humpty-dump head: I wanted to put out my hand and stop it from falling, from crashing on to the floor, between the swollen pumpkins which were his feet. His body was like some sinister, tropical plant giving out these distorted fruits. And what was so horrible was that there were fruits on the fruits, as it were. Stones on the fingers. Great lumps on the head.

We found out later that he was suffering from fits.

Now of all the diseases that can benefit a soldier I give fits a very high place. An ulcer can be a fine thing to have. A man will infallibly be delivered of an ulcer after three weeks in hospital on a diet of Macleans and milk puddings. The doctors—especially the young doctors—will fix him up and send him back again, and after a couple of months—but I've known a man do it in less—he'll be back in hospital. His discharge is only a matter of perseverance. Some men swear by perforated lungs. There was a man I once knew who could squeeze his stomach in like an orange and spew up a little yellowy froth. He was discharged in a week. I could go through the whole list, giving you the points for and against every single complaint. But if I had my time over again I should choose fits. No doctor will have fits on his conscience.

We congratulated Hulbert. "You'll be out of here in a week," we said.

But it appeared that he did not want to leave the Army. He turned over on his stomach and blubbered; he lay there and roared and snivelled. (His arms were so long that he could put them right under the mattress and scoop up his hands from the floor and clasp them.)

During the day he sat on the edge of the bed and polished his buttons. Over and over again. He blew on them, and touched them, and rubbed them for an hour on end. His fabulous, loose fat was almost happy. He was like a Catholic with his beads, a blind man touching familiar things.

"You don't have to do that, you know."

"I like it," he said. "But I like it."

On Wednesdays, between two and four, we had visitors. Observe us, then, on our best behaviour, polished and clean, white faces against white pillows, the forgotten ones squinting out of the corners of their eyes to examine the girl friends. I reflect: the girl friend always gives you away. You can be as nice as pie and take a hand in a game of poker; but the girl friend will give you away. Just when you think you are safe in the anonymity of your uniform, she announces your clan, betrays your civilian status.

The aisle is shining like a sheet of Vauxhall glass. (The healthy ones have run a mop up and down it to the song of the Volga boatmen.) The girl friends arrive. There they go, swinging their hips, their feet licking the boards like tongues; they are so refined, so ladylike. Girls from Woolworth's, from Barker's, from Harrod's—ladies conscious of their bright new refinement. And as I watch them I hear the Pole on my left say to some slut with hair that looks like singed grass, "You 'ave a schmut on your nose."

Hulbert's girl friend gave him away. She was his mother. She sits on my right, swaddled in mink, and her ready smile falls emptily on my woollen, striped pyjamas. Age has tweaked her face into a hundred little lines, but above the nose the eyes are as hard and bright as a chicken's. And she talks. How she talks! About life after his discharge. About jobs. About society. Society and this oaf, swinging his primeval tail among the bric-à-brac.

He lay and cried. Large, empty tears ran down his cheeks.

From her talk, out of his muttered, disjointed sentences, I have gradually put together the story of his life.

He was one of the unwanted, he was even more unwanted than any worthless miner in South Wales before the war. The miner, squatting among the monuments of the slag heaps and motionless wheels, could at least imagine that there was a job somewhere if he could only get away and reach it. But Hulbert had no such illusion. He knew. Mamma had pulled every possible string for him. I can see her making up her parched face, putting on the mink, driving round to see her friends in an ostentatious car, talking, talking, saying, "So if you could help the poor boy . . ." They had helped. Often. Hulbert had been in a bank, in a solicitor's office, on the land. He had never lasted more than three months. Not merely because he was stupid, but because of his fits. Think of a midday rush in the bank and Hulbert going off into a fit, braying and hee-hawing, there in the tabernacle itself, lashing out with his great arms, lathering at the mouth.

Then the Army took him. The Army has many horrors: there is the loneliness, the lostness, the fear, the dirt, the shame, the shadowy unreality. But even the humblest of its servants has a place. Even Hulbert had a niche, a usefulness. It was not only that his feet came down with all the other feet, his arms swung with all the other arms. There was something more to it than finding himself accidentally in a rhythm which had always eluded him. For the first time he found that he could do something. He discovered that he could peel potatoes, empty latrines, polish buttons. I am sure that he handled every potato with love, snipped out the eyes and warts, fashioned it like an artist.

And now they were going to abandon him, cast him out into the wilderness. They were going to return him, shop-soiled, send him forth into an eternity of closed and unresponsive doors. He could not believe it. Hour after hour he polished his buttons or laboured at his massive boots. In the intervals he lay on his bed, hands trailing on the floor, face blank and soggy.

On the day he got his discharge he did not seem to realise what had happened. He was to report back to his unit first: that was the only thing he understood. He was to leave at ten o'clock, but he was dressed and ready by seven. For the next three hours he simply sat on the edge of his bed, all dressed up, and looked at the clock over the swing doors. When he said anything, he still kept his eyes on the clock, as if he were afraid the hands might play some neat trick on him, rush round the face while his back was turned and chime in another day.

The clock struck ten. He put his hat on and turned to say good-bye. "I'll volunteer for overseas soon as I get back," he said to me. Then he went marching through the ward, banging his boots down on the boards, his face triumphant, wild with happiness.

HUGH MASSINGHAM

RADIO NOTES

THE trouble is that the gulf which divides children from adults includes not only the poetry of make-believe, but also the world of ethics. Capricious here as in every other respect, little Tommy Bray will steal with aplomb, but will jib at implicating Harry, who abetted him. Gloria will tell the truth if she is feeling like it, but if obscurely vexed, will indulge in the most impenetrable deceit. As Richard Hughes pointed out long ago in a novel of genius, no standard we can formulate, except that of unyielding love, will cover satisfactorily the wild graph of the childish mind. So that the State is at a disadvantage, all along the line, in dealing with what it calls "juvenile delinquency." Miss Jennifer Wayne, in the latest programme of her admirable series, *This is the Law*, showed that she was aware of this, but did not, I think, emphasize strongly enough the central dilemma of the legal situation. Her hypothetical case was clearly and deftly constructed and extremely well acted (how often do we hear acting as "natural" as this in full-length radio plays?); and she put first things first—in this case, the nervous exasperation of the harassed, over-worked, not over-intelligent mother. This is crux No. 1; for a line has to be drawn beyond which it is illegitimate for adults to take the law into their own hands: from the stray slap to the unthinkable horror of the Gough case can be a shorter step than is comfortable to contemplate. But an even greater dilemma is presented by the fact that in cases of adult *versus* child, ordinary justice is not involved. This throws the entire burden on to the magistrate, for in seven instances out of ten the point of law is inappropriate and, if applied, does more harm than good. A child may not take the oath in court unless he be of an age to understand what he is saying. Miss Wayne was careful to underline this; but I wish she had gone on to show that at the moment when her Tommy Bray was taking the oath, he was thinking, not of the gravity of the act, but of some complicated contraption representing God knows what, and made with cotton reels and a jam jar and that piece of three-ply which Dad had bought to make a pipe-rack and now couldn't find anywhere. Miss Wayne will retort that she was only concerned with the law in itself; but "the air is our concern," as Cecil McGivern would say, and if it is going to be used to interpret the problem of child crime—and I think we shall agree that it ought to be so used—then the bewildering cross-fire of desire and apprehension, of ecstasy and anguish, which makes up the childish heart, must occupy the centre of the picture. Mrs. Bray herself was a child once, and if she has become an irresponsible mother, that is *our* fault. Meanwhile, the problem is aggravated at present by the dislocation of family life: Father, who is the fly-wheel of this delicate engine, is "gone to the war," with the result that the Borstals and Remand Institutions are crowded out with Tommies, Ernies and Harries.

"Just a moment, while I hang some daffodils over the microphones"—only Louis MacNeice would think of so delightfully frivolous a line with which to start a broadcast. *The March Hare Resigns* turned out to be a kind of revue, in the Gingold style, with some amusing lyrics and prodigiously witty music by Anthony Hopkins. Whitehall, Oxford, Westminster ("Ask that hare why he is not carrying a rear light"), Planners (parody of Shostakovich from the band), smart women: the touch was suitably light, but somehow this programme did not hold my attention all the time. Esmé Percy in his element, of course; but the fun was not quite fast and furious enough. All the same, an example to Variety.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*April 8th.* Symphony Concert (2.30. Beethoven: Fourth Concerto and Seventh Symphony); "This is the Law." (6.30. "Manslaughter"); "The Wheels of Chance." (8.30. H. G. Wells serial).

April 9th. Poetry of W H. Auden (4.15); "Lost Horizon" (Play, 9.30).

April 11th. Symphony Concert: Works of John Ireland (7.45); "The Lady Vanishes" (7.45. G.F.P.).

April 12th. Schumann's Carnaval played by Solomon (9.30); "Hubbub in the Subbub" (10.15).

April 13th. "Should there be Common Ownership" (Discussion: 7.30); "Friday the Thirteenth" (Play by Lance Sieveking: 8.0).

April 14.—Symphony Concert (2.30); "Payment Deferred" (Thriller: 9.30).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Hotel Berlin," at Warner's

"M," at Torch Theatre, Knightsbridge

All arrows point to Berlin, and Hollywood has managed to get its thriller out in time. We are transported, at Warner's, to a Berlin on the eve of disaster. The party big shots are planning their disappearance to South America; the general concerned in the last attempt on Hitler is given twenty-four hours, a loaded revolver, a locked room; the middle-aged and the flat-footed have been called up; the big raids have started; Armagnac is being drunk in the lounge; a pilot is spreading himself, for 48 hours, on champagne and sofas; the hotel-receptionist is looking for a pound of coffee to exchange for a pair of shoes; a famous actress is rehearsing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; there is a fugitive from a concentration camp who sometimes lurks in the cellars, sometimes staggers drunk out of the front door in an officer's uniform; the Gestapo are after everyone except themselves; the only figure missing from this Adlonish assembly seems to be Mr. P. G. Wodehouse—no, of course, he packed and left some while ago. It is at least an exciting guess at reality, and Miss Vicki Baum, always at home in a grand hotel, has this one brilliantly sized up. So, to the democrat of the fishing smack, must the *Titanic* have gone down, in evening dress and with what meals, too! Outside this *Berlin Hotel* the Reich is tottering, the fortresses drop their eggs, the front-liner and the factory hand labour unseen to provide the table and furnishings of the Nazi aristocracy. And lavish, as one might expect, the fittings are. The famous actress occupies a royal suite on the scale of the Kanes' drawing-room, and though we never see her in that enormous bed of hers, it would be quite a job to find her if we did. The doors are made for listening, too. It all makes for vivid, varied, up-to-the-minute entertainment. (Capable acting by Raymond Massey, Andrea King, Peter Lorre, Helmut Dantine and others.) But haven't the thrills been given a rather blunt edge? Oughtn't the search for the escaped fugitive to have been exploited more cinematically than it is? One rarely feels the menace either of plot or of camera-angle which distinguished such thrillers as "*M*" or *Suspicion*. Some more than usually subtle dialogue about good and bad Germans doesn't altogether make up the loss.

"*M*" is back again, at the little Torch Theatre, to remind us of standards in this class of film. The murderer whistling repeatedly his jerky tune from Grieg, the toy balloons floating away, the slow inevitability of capture—there is the real bouquet of crime, beside which the gangsters of *Berlin Hotel* are only paper roses.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Easter," at the Gateway Theatre, 18 Chepstow Villas, W.11

During an interval Mr. Basil Ashmore told us briefly the aims of this new little theatre: poetic drama allied with music. Strindberg's *Easter* till the 14th; then a Saki comedy, plays by Yeats, MacNeice and others. *Easter* was a brave and difficult choice. This rarely performed play, with its mixture of religion, poetry and neurosis, is a sketch in the later manner of *The Road to Damascus*, not perhaps wholly successful. In a suburban setting the drama of Holy Week induces a passion of the kind in which Strindberg revelled: he is defiant and self-pitying for two acts ("Christ suffered for us, then why must we go on suffering?") and repentant in the last. There should have been more exultance as well as bitterness in Mr. Richmond Nairne's Elis as he cried woe, listened to the fabulous footsteps of the creditor, rose with the sunlight and plunged with the return of snow. The weather, like the footsteps in the street, the tingling telephone wires, should be momentous. How to sharpen this neurotic edge must be the producer's chief problem; it should—but at the Gateway it didn't always—make our flesh creep. Without it the sudden dives into symbolism are apt to seem queer and strained. Miss Josephine Stuart, as the madly inspired child, did well with Strindberg's words, but might have varied an angelic innocence when she let slip such phrases as, "I always go straight to the stove in a room—how careless people are about unburnt letters!" The tension of the play was remarkably enhanced with the entrance in the last act of Mr. Esmé Percy as the avenging creditor, whose footsteps had dogged us the whole evening: a brilliant piece of acting. Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ," capably played by the Leonard Salzedo String Quartet, introduced each act as Strindberg intended. The Gateway Theatre deserves our support: it has original aims, an intelligent producer, actors who improve every week, and—seats to fill.

THE ASPENS

The aspen leaves are down.
Those trembling lips no more
Will touch our hearts with fear.
But with that fall is gone
Alertness of the mind,
A looking habit, a keen
Instinct, such as men blind
From birth possess, who see
The unseeable, know the unknown,
And need no aspen tree.

RICHARD CHURCH

FROZEN SPRINGS

Big Business in the United States takes the view that the poorest country in Europe should not be given a tin of dried milk free if it can pay for it at any future date.—Freda White in the *Daily Herald*.

It's too late now for pompous platitudes
To whitewash over UNRRA's phoney front;
Too much of stark reality intrudes,
The truth cries out for language plain and blunt:
UNRRA has not, and never had, the goods,
It's an exploded advertising stunt—
The first world-wide United Nation's charity
Deserves its richly earned unpopularity.

The generous currents of Hot Springs have cooled,
Relief has not kept pace with liberation,
World produce, for the needs of mankind pooled,
Implies priorities in allocation,
And Hot Springs promises are overruled
Where countries are too poor for exploitation—
All public money for relief expenses
Has been obtained, in fact, by false pretences.

The pledge of plenty, dazzling Europe's eyes,
Was merely a high-sounding resolution—
UNRRA stored no emergency supplies
For free relief of utter destitution,
And now, when one-half Europe daily dies,
It makes a stop-gap, token distribution—
For beggared States are not the prior claimants,
But those who offer cash or lease-lend payments.

And will the starving millions now applaud
Its pious catalogue of good intentions?
Hamstrung at home, discredited abroad,
UNRRA is now seen in its true dimensions.
A vast, pretentious, monumental fraud
That justifies the gravest apprehensions—
Mankind was fooled by UNRRA's mercy mission;
Mercy must be a business proposition.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to X.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Lost, between Whitechapel and Renshaw Street, half gent's waistcoat.—Advert. in *Liverpool Echo*.

Owing to the lack of speakers, Bolton's "Home and Family Week" to counteract the wartime increase in immorality has been postponed for twelve months.—*Manchester Guardian*.

Felixstowe had a different story to tell. Said a resident: "No crowds, no food queues, no room-hunting—no life at all."—*News Chronicle*.

Gentlewoman wanted (temporary), to look after 10 Pekingese; comfortable home, own sitting-room; 30*s*. weekly; no rough work; reserved situation.—Advert. in *Scotsman*.

The person who took a refuse bin from —— may have the lid if he or she calls at that address!—Advert. from *The Workington Star and Harrington Guardian*.

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Correspondence

THE AIR FOR BIG BUSINESS

SIR,—In "The Air for Big Business" you "gravely doubt" whether the shipowners to whom has been allotted the task of running an air line to South America will be spurred to develop aviation to its utmost in competition with their own ships. Against this reflection on the honesty of our intentions I, as chairman both of one of the shipping companies concerned and of the air line, must protest.

I have said, as loudly as anything can be said to-day (on the wireless, that is), that we were going into the air for aviation's own sake, and not as a counterpoise to shipping. Your innuendo is that shipping and air are necessarily antagonistic, and that there is something ominous in the control of one form of service by the other.

May I draw your attention to what actually does happen when shipping interests own an air line? In Australia there are five shipping companies, four of them inter-State coastal shipping companies who make their profits from the carriage of goods and passengers along the southern and eastern coasts of Australia. In 1936 these shipping companies formed an air company, Australian National Airways (ANA). In the first year of operation the company employed 120, flew 19,000 hours, covered 2,500,000 miles, carried 24,000 passengers, 309 lb. of freight and no mail. In 1943 ANA employed 4,000, flew 47,439 hours, covered 6,705,000 miles, carried 122,820 passengers, 1,607,850 lb. of freight, and 6,266,130 lb. of mail.

The founder of ANA was a young Tasmanian, an A.I.F. Officer, Captain Ivan Holyman, whose shipping firm was formed in 1852. It was this shipping man who pioneered the first air line ever to be flown in Australia.

You will admit that the nature of the capitalist "Monster" does not change with latitude. What Australia has proved, and we, too, shall prove in our turn, is that ships and aircraft are complementary, indeed necessary, one to the other.

J. W. BOOTH, *Chairman*

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TRUTH AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—May I apologise to "Flying Officer" for my failure to make my meaning sufficiently plain in my letter of March 17th. If, in the second sentence of my second paragraph, he will substitute the words "we Catholics believed in" for the words "Catholicism was out for," my meaning will, I hope, be clear to him.

That meaning was not that we (Roman Catholics) put forward the doctrine of "parental rights all round" as our *motive* in the Schools campaign. We put it forward as our *belief*, and, I think, as a piece of propaganda in reply to the possible objection that if Catholics were "on top," non-Catholics would not get from them what they were asking from non-Catholics.

Now that my point is plain, may I ask "Flying Officer":—

1. Does he deny that in the Schools campaign we pretended that we believed in "parental rights all round"?
2. Does he deny that I was entitled to ask in a Catholic paper what the Catholic Faith was about parental rights?
3. Does he consider that the late Cardinal Hinsley's method of dealing with me was that which would have been employed by a man who really believed that I was in the wrong?
4. Does he consider the failure of the present Archbishop of Westminster, of Canon Mahoney and the others to reply to my letter of March 17th creditable to them or to the Church?

JOHN V. SIMCOX

SIR,—Here is a fact such as "Flying Officer" desires. In 1930, or thereabouts, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham came to Cambridge and preached for the Schools in Cardinal Bourne's language. His connection with the University, first as pupil and then for some years as teacher, secured him respectful attention. I wrote to the paper which had published his sermon, asking the Bishop the same question which Prof. Vernon Butler had asked of Cardinal Bourne. My challenge elicited no reply; nor, so far as I am aware, did my story of the incident printed in a book a few months later.

Cambridge. G. G. COULTON

INDIA

SIR,—Sir Alfred Watson, in your issue of March 24th, uses one of those arguments which create and confirm in Indian minds suspicion about the sincerity of British professions. His main contention, it may be recalled, is against your correspondent's suggestion that British honour is pledged to a settlement with India, and that she is committed to take every step to bring this about. This Sir Alfred denies as not being, in his opinion, in accord with facts. In his view "the British Government are not in any way committed to give India Dominion status until a constitution has been found which is not unacceptable to the main elements in India." It is not surprising, in view of such arguments, that Indians, even if they were to transcend above their own experiences, should naturally wonder as to why such a constitution has not been found. Perhaps Sir Alfred will agree with them that once Britain has unequivocally committed herself to relinquish power in India, such a constitution will be forthcoming.

Such hair-splitting arguments, Sir, will not lead to a settlement which is the desire of the overwhelming masses of both the British and Indian peoples. The tragic situation in India, the claims which the impending intensification of the war against Japan will make upon Indian resources, and the utter inability of the present administration to meet the needs of the country or of the war, cry out for a settlement. Sir Alfred's tacit suggestion that nothing can be done until after the war will result, if persisted in, in avoidable human misery and suffering and the loss of lives not only for the Indian people but also for the large number of British and Allied troops fighting in the Far East. Lord Wavell's presence here affords an opportunity to examine afresh the Indian policy of the Government. The release of the detained Congress leaders is the first essential step to bring about a settlement. And this does not require the end of the war to be given effect to. M. A. LATIF

Heath Street, London, N.W.3.

INSIDE THE ASYLUM

SIR,—I greatly appreciate the tone of all the letters, including that of O. F. Griffith, but I did not notice in the hospital where I was the overworking of the nursing staff to which he refers. The hours were unduly long, but two of the men on duty used to monopolise the only two really easy chairs in the common-room for many hours, and only left them to spring obsequiously to attention when a doctor came in unexpectedly. The necessary tasks were needlessly rushed. It was usual to shave thirty men in half an hour, before breakfast, using the same blade. One afternoon visitors called at the proper time, but neither of the attendants moved. When the bell had rung three times, one of the patients dared to mention that there were visitors outside. "Let them bloody well wait," was the reply.

I feel that the formation of a society which will do for mental patients what the Howard League and similar societies try to do for prisoners is necessary. Its aims would be, the education of the public, so that mental illness ceases to be treated as a joke (at present a stigma attaches to anybody known to have been in a mental hospital), the attempt to place a better type of man upon visiting committees and governing bodies, and the improvement of conditions within the hospitals. A. B. C.

SIR,—I feel the letter issued by the office of the National Council for Mental Health to be egregiously misleading. Do these people really *know* anything about what actually occurs in these institutions?

In regard to the misleading and bland suggestion that the Visiting Committee "can be appealed to," the Visiting Committee in many enormous institutions is a farce: and as for "appeals to the Board of Control," you have only to know your literature on the subject to see what actually occurs in practice. The history of Mrs. Ruth Graham will soon enlighten any person whom it is possible to enlighten; and conditions are the same now as they were a few years ago, when that document was penned.

In regard to complaints by relatives, it is virtually impossible for "patients" to convey to relatives any notion of the miseries they are suffering, on account of the fact that all outgoing letters are rigidly censored and that the slightest complaint may be followed by punishment of the "patient." On Visiting Day any complaint to relatives is reported by keepers, with dire consequences to the "patient," and the relative is assured that any such complaint is due to pure delusion. Belief or non-belief is thus entirely in ratio to the degree of love the relative has for the "patient," even if the latter dared to make any complaint. In some cases, not a few, relatives are the very persons who cannot be appealed to and are themselves the cause of "nerve breakdown."

X. Y. Z.

NAVAL CONDITIONS

SIR,—Apropos Critic's account of conditions in "a famous naval establishment," I think that some attention might also be drawn to the arrangements for medical treatment there. It is nothing for a man to wait, say, from 8.30 until 11, before he can see the doctor. The waiting has to be done in an outside area, which in the winter months was bitterly cold. Many men refused to report sick with colds, etc., saying that to wait for treatment in such conditions only aggravated the disease.

The rooms in which the doctors work are ill-designed and overcrowded. There are no proper facilities for medical inspection. People during joining routine and draft routine are herded together indiscriminately in a tiny room, which is packed to capacity. Men have to wait hours for a cursory medical inspection which may only take a few seconds. These are not temporary arrangements, for I have been in and out of these barracks on several occasions.

All that your correspondents say about the conditions is true; if anything, it is an understatement. As you say, there is almost unbelievable boredom and waste of time. CYRIL D. TURBAYNE

[Other letters have reached us confirming Critic's allegations from correspondents with personal experience of the conditions described.—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

THE COUNTRYSIDE

SIR,—We cannot let Mr. Master have the last word; he is a little too reassuring. As a Londoner who has been translated into a farm labourer during the war I should like to give you my experience of local conditions.

I have been accommodated severally in a hut, reconditioned house, and now for the past three years have been living in an ancient cottage built in 1856, having no water, lighting, sanitation and apparently no damp course. This is the best on the farm. As far as I know at least one-half of the cottages are like this locally.

All our cooking is done on a coal fire. On washing day my wife carries about twelve buckets of

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KEGAN PAUL

Anna Kavan
I AM LAZARUS
'One kind of fiction still fascinates me—that which deals with queer psychological experiences and describes the world in which people live who are mad, half-mad or criminals. In the first place, though it is a miserable world in which I would not live myself for anything, yet sometimes it can be shot with a strange uncomfortable poetry and events are at any rate unexpected. . . *I Am Lazarus* consists of a series of sketches of people who are various distances off complete mental derangement. . . . Several have gleams of the kind of poetic beauty one finds in the prose of Rilke.'
DESMOND MACCARTHY, in *The Sunday Times* [7s 6d net]
JONATHAN CAPE

water from a pump a hundred yards away. If it were not for the generosity of an unconventional farmer, who allows us to bath at the farmhouse, a thorough wash would be almost impossible.

A townsman, in normal times, may choose his house according to his salary, but the farm worker is condemned to an often inadequate cottage whatever his wage. Personally I would prefer an improvement to my house in lieu of any increase in pay. Reconditioning should be compulsory, with State help for the poorer farmer. At present byres are improved or machinery installed before any real change is made to the workers' cottages.

We pay wholesale prices for milk and potatoes and buy rabbits from a neighbouring farmer who has the shooting rights. Except in the case of dairymen free milk is not customary here.

And is the countryside beautiful? To the occasional visitor, yes, but the majority of country people I have met have only two values: work and money. The shepherd does not see lambs as Blake saw them. They mean extra work, and they have a market value. I must confess, too, that a cornfield, to me, is not the thrilling sight it used to be in Van Gogh's pictures, but a symbol of drudgery. I know the monotony of ploughing and the weary leaden feet plodding behind the harrows when seed is sown. Then later the hot, heavy days of harvesting, stooking and carting, until I repeat the jobs in my sleep! I envy those who find farming romantic or a source of salvation.

The purely physical work with little thought behind it, once the knack is acquired, is stagnating to the intellect. Nowhere is adult education more necessary than in the country, to give the farming folk wider interests and a more balanced life. A third-rate cinema, dances and whist drives are the only forms of recreation, with a C.E.M.A. play or concert once a year. The latter I have heard described as "not for the likes of us," and there are many things, books, music, pictures, etc., which broaden experience and add to the enjoyment of life, which are neglected and regarded as useless.

EDWARD LEWIS

Auchengool Cottage, Dundrennan,
Castle Douglas.

BOMB DAMAGE AND THE BED-BUG

SIR,—Your correspondent writing on the repair of dilapidated and bug-ridden houses in your issue of February 10th touched on a very important social question—but only with the tip of his little finger!

As an entomologist in an insecticide manufacturing concern, I can confirm that many men have refused to work in bomb-damaged and/or dilapidated property which is bug-infested.

It is obvious to everyone who is on the spot that a very large amount of national money is being spent in the repair of this type of property; but the outstanding point is this—no attempt is being made to correlate the work of the builders with the work of disinfestation: and I can confirm from actual visits that four weeks after the repair gang had made an excellent job of a block of flats the bugs were in control again. An unparalleled opportunity has occurred for disinfestation by structural and insecticidal means, which is passing by rapidly without action. Gangs of men are working through this property and for a very little extra expenditure a large measure of control of this social evil could be accomplished. Some authorities are avowedly awaiting the Millennium—the American over-publicisation of D.D.T. having done its work. It cannot be over-stressed that there are other synthetic insecticides in good supply and which are recommended for this application by the Medical Research Council.

On the social aspects of this problem I will not enlarge, except to inform those who are unacquainted with the details at first hand, that we are not dealing with the poverty-stricken but with the feckless.

"Plummers," NORMAN E. HICKIN
Bletchingley, Surrey.

A CO-OPERATIVE LIBRARY

SIR,—The Education Committee of the London Co-operative Society have recently inaugurated a Co-operative Library and Reading Room on the premises of the Society's Education Department, 34 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, for use by their members and other interested persons.

The functions of the library are the dissemination of knowledge of, and the promotion of research in, the Co-operative Movement, the provision of books and pamphlets on social and allied subjects, as well as the systematic collection of material relating to the history of the Co-operative Movement in the London area.

The number of books, periodicals and pamphlet material in the library is as yet modest, but constant additions are being made to the stocks. Owing to wartime conditions, however, difficulties are being experienced in the acquisition of many standard books and publications, while records of Co-operative activity in the Metropolis are difficult to locate. May we, therefore, be allowed to appeal to your readers to assist us in our work of building up our library in two ways: (1) by making available to us works on Co-operation, the history of the working-class movement and the social sciences, and (2) by placing at our disposal books, pamphlets, periodicals and miscellaneous records shedding light on the growth of Co-operation in London and its neighbouring districts. We should be prepared, if necessary, to purchase those of the publications offered to us which we deem useful.

GEORGE COLLINS (*Chairman*)
JAMES T. GUEST (*Secretary*)

KILLING

SIR,—Mr. Desmond MacCarthy is surely being desperately ingenuous in professing to see no difference in cruel wickedness between the vivisectionist "groping for cures in the tormented entrails of friendly dogs" and the Russian commissar killing (as quickly and painlessly as the circumstances permitted) a criminally lazy and irresponsible stationmaster. To point this out is not necessarily to justify the commissar's act; but it should also be made clear that while the liquidation of the stationmaster was an emergency measure, the cure-groping is a cold and calculated policy. I say nothing of the comparative results of the commissar's action and the policy of research by dog-torture.

ALLAN M. LAING

19, Wavertree Nook Road, Liverpool, 15.

LOOTING

SIR,—Critic says in the "London Diary" of March 31st that "looting by American soldiers is almost an accepted practice, too seldom punished."

Looting is obviously uncivilised and deplorable, but in fairness to the Americans it must be said that all soldiers, of whatever nationality, loot enemy territory, particularly and understandably troops who have just won a battle and captured a town. It must be remembered that these troops are living very much from hand to mouth, and if they find some good blankets, plates to eat off, a saucepan to brew up their tea—is that looting?

I don't know what measures British and American military authorities are taking to stop looting in Germany, but when I was there ten days ago it was certainly untrue to say that it only went on in the American sectors. LUCY MOOREHEAD

L.G. AND DIZZY

SIR,—You say that Lloyd George was "the first man in our history who owed his elevation to the chief place in the Kingdom to his own personality and to nothing else"; but surely he had a predecessor in Disraeli, who had no money or social position to speak of, and was further handicapped by his race. EDWARD MARSH

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Jules Supervielle is among the most isolated and interesting of modern poets. You cannot place him with the expatriates, like Eliot and Henry James and Ezra Pound, who have rediscovered Europe and helped to teach the Europeans to see their continent for the first time. Nor can you place him with Conrad or with Koestler, men who have borrowed a language or a nationality to express themselves more intensely. Supervielle is a Uruguayan by birth, and in a sense he is a native poet, although he writes in French. More often than not his voice seems to come to us from mid-Atlantic, as he looks eastward for his music and westward for his theme. Wishing to speak the most nearly universal language of the civilised world, he encountered no obstacle in his race or his place of origin. There is far more cultural, and therefore psychological, unity between the Southern Americas and Europe than between Europe and the United States. No mirage of a South American "way" or a South American "dream" has driven the creative spirits of the southern hemisphere back upon themselves. They recognise and reflect their "genius loci," but they are unembarrassed by those doctrines of spiritual separatism which nourish the contradictions of North American affairs.

We can only guess at the reasons which induced Supervielle to write in French. If he is bilingual by choice, it is easy to understand his preference. No writer could ask more than to be a tributary stream in the swift and smoothly flowing river of French verse. But even here he differs from another bilingual writer, Julien Green. You feel that Green is native to France no less than to the French language, that he is transplanted. You do not feel this very often with Supervielle, for all his mastery of French style. His achievement only proves once more that the French language, in the hands of one who intimately responds to it, can express the most varied and particular vision.

It is impossible to attach Supervielle to any school of philosophy or politics or prosody. He is seldom explicitly Christian, although his short story, "The Ox and the Ass," is among the most tender treatments of the Nativity in literature. But neither is he post-Christian, like the majority of modern writers. It would, I think, be truer to call him pre-Christian. His affinities are with the Old rather than with the New Testament; his Christian feelings are intimations and expectancies rather than memories and regrets. There is a sense, of course, in which every good poet looks out on to the world for the first time; but in the poems of Supervielle the universe of nature—for that is his primary theme—is made to seem both objectively and subjectively a new one. It is matter not for analysis but for astonishment.

L'univers même est établi
Sur des colonnes étonnées.

Naïvety is a perilous attribute to apply to any poet who has lived among the sophistries of the twentieth century, even if he has not been affected by them. But it is not easy to deny it to Supervielle, or to gainsay its power to give both strength and innocence to his verse.

Most of his poetry belongs to the first five days of the Creation, and scarcely touches the complexity of human nature. It is true that in his novels "Le Voleur d'Enfants" and "Le Survivant"—for the two books compose a single continuous story—he treats of a very bizarre human situation. The Uruguayan Colonel who kidnaps children from the Parisian boulevards and the London Zoo is a real and arresting figure. But he and his companions are described rather as human beings might be described living under a glass case; with care and charity, but also with a wondering detachment. The degrees of detachment in literature would make an interesting study. Irony, fantasy and satire all imply a standing away from the subject rather than a sympathy with it, and it is from the second of these viewpoints that Supervielle looks out upon the world. Only Giraudoux, among French writers of to-day, has equalled his mastery and surprise in this genre. Most English fantasy trembles on the precipice of "whimsy." It is a dodge to escape reality, rather than an imaginative equation of it. But in Supervielle's fantasy the outlines are never blurred; there is no trace of apology or self-consciousness. There is, on the contrary, a literalism which compels assent. Take the opening of his "L'Enfant de la Haute Mer," so clear and so categorical:

> Comment s'était formée cette rue flottante? Quels marins, avec l'aide de quels architectes, l'avaient construite dans le haut Atlantique à la surface de la mer, au-dessus d'un gouffre de six mille mètres? Cette longue rue aux maisons de briques rouges si décolorées qu'elles prenaient une teinte gris-de-France, ces toits d'ardoise, de tuile, ces humbles boutiques immuables?

Only at the end do we learn, in a few drastic lines, why the young girl lives on alone in the city that submerges at the first sight of a ship on the horizon. Because a certain

> Charles Liévens, de Steenvoorde, matelot de pont du quatremâts *Le Hardi,* qui avait perdu sa fille âgée de douze ans, pendant un de ses voyages, et, une nuit, par 55 degrés de latitude Nord et 35 de longitude Ouest, pensa longuement à elle, avec une force terrible, pour le grand malheur de cette enfant.

This has the terrifying objectivity of a parable or a fairy tale.

"Rani" is a moving story of an Indian whose facial disfigurement excludes him from the society of his tribe, and in "L'Inconnue de la Seine" we have another study in solitude and separatism, or, more precisely perhaps, in non-conformity. It is a theme which haunts Supervielle—the disjointed existence of the dissociated man or woman—and he treats it in a convention of almost surrealist fantasy, where another would have treated it in a convention of social realism. He is most successful, I think, in his shorter stories. "L'Homme de la Pampa," which is his most elaborate essay of this kind, does not quite come off: it fails to reach a point. The idea of a man constructing a volcano for his private amusement and transporting it by sea from Montevideo to Paris, is certainly engaging; but Supervielle deserts it in mid-Atlantic and goes off after other game. We are dazed, as we are in front of an abstract painting whose convention we are ready to accept but whose coherence eludes us. The strength of Supervielle's fantasy is in a certain rationality; when the treatment becomes as arbitrary as the theme, our credulity strains and snaps.

Most of Supervielle's work leads us back to the aboriginal landscape of its author's imagining. To the sea and its recurring theme of suicide:

Le noyé cherche la chanson
Où s'était formé son jeune âge,
Ecoute en vain les coquillages
Et les fait choir au sombre fond.

To Montevideo—the "ville natale":

Alentour naissaient mille bruits
Mais si pleins encore de silence
Que l'oreille croyait oüir
Le chant de sa propre innocence.

And beyond, again, to the pampas and their estancias which have given to the poet himself, as they gave to Colonel Bigua, the experience of wealth and poverty:

> Sur la route, tandis qu'on changeait les chevaux, deux ibis roses s'envolèrent. Un héron, immobile, de profil parmi les joncs, à une vingtaine de mètres de la voiture, fit quelques pas vers une mare proche et ses pattes dures s'ouvraient comme les branches d'un compas dans une succession d'angles très aigus. Il s'arrêta au bord de l'eau, reprenant une immobilité qui, presque aussitôt, parut séculaire. Plaine sans villes, sans horloges, ni calendriers, un temps despotique et délirant règnait ici. Plaine qui, de toutes parts, s'adonnait violemment à la monotonie.

In his later poems ("La Fable du Monde—1938," and in verses recently published in "Fontaine") Supervielle returns to the theme of creation and immortality. The creative act, its sad paradox of voluntarism and necessity, haunts and baffles him. His vivid awareness of nature, and continuous communion with it, tempts him to pantheistic reverie. The infinite abysses do not frighten him as they frightened Pascal. The wondering soul and the Absolute Godhead are linked by a thousand details in which both have a part. His God is "très atténué." The divine accompaniment to the life of man is neither remote nor unchanging.

Tu t'absentes, tu reviens,
Tu es toujours en voyage
Heureux celui qui retient
Un bon Dieu comme un bon vin
Qui prend avec lui de l'âge.

This is as far from the confident rhetorical orthodoxy of Claudel as it is from the gleaming and chiselled symbolism of Valéry. Both these other—and in many ways greater—poets impose their conceptions on the immediate matter of their writing. Supervielle submits to a native influence at the same time as he masters an adopted language. His most intricate meditation starts from his brother, the Indian hunter, or his sister, the forest quail; and its conclusion is invariably tempered by that

rumeur cent fois familière
De petits pas anciens dans les escaliers d'à présent.

His verses are only slightly shadowed by the anxieties of our time, and although he can admit perplexity he is untouched by despair. Perhaps his apparent detachment from human beings has given him this immunity.

Nous ferons un grand bûcher des angoisses de la terre
Pour le vouer à la mort qui s'eloignera de nous,
Et remonterons sans remords les plus secrétes rivières
Où se reflètent les coeurs qui ne tremblent plus que d'amour.

And in a poem called "L'Espérance" he can exclaim:

Ah pensons tout bas, n'effarouchons rien
Je sens que se forme un secret soleil.

The "secret sun" which nourishes his hope was not eclipsed even in the most critical hours of 1940. In verses addressed to France he cried:

Comme du haut ciel je regarde la France,
Ses villes et ses champs dans le fond de l'offense,
Prisonniers de nos jours aux élans condamnés
Je nous regarde tous à survivre obstinés.

At the moment of imminent and universal despair he found a word to articulate his faith, not in France alone, but in the survival of the human spirit. Later, in "Le Ressuscité," where the poet's thought and his technique are perhaps most brilliantly wedded, he allows himself the paradox that the dead are more alive than the living, that life is no more than the shadow which death throws behind it.

Ne me répliquez pas que je suis un mensonge
Je vis plus fort que vous, j'ai fait le tour du sort
C'est vous qui ressemblez aux figures des songes
Vous ignorez le poids que vous donne la mort.

This "poids," the *species æternitatis,* is the perspective of all Supervielle's writing, and it gives a certain unreal quality to his terrestrial landscapes. The world, he suggests, is afraid of its immortalities, as he concludes with a bitter, unsmiling irony:

Allez, j'ai ma fierté sous mon indifférence
Et puisque vous craignez mon abrupt renouveau
Je ne suis pas de ceux qui refont des avances
Et d'un pas de vivant je retourne au tombeau.

At the present moment Supervielle is living in the Argentine making films, which one eagerly hopes will be made available in this country. These may well force wider attention to a writer who has never composed anything at second-hand. The total of his work is not large. It contains nothing as original as Valéry's "La Jeune Parque" or St-Jean Perse's "Anabase," nothing as profound in its thought or as sweeping in its compass as Claudel's "Le Soulier de Satin." But it is, in almost every line, poetry lit by the imagination, and sustained by the feeling, of a sensitive, candid soul. It has character as well as beauty. It communicates itself easily, but is never commonplace. It gives an immediate pleasure, which is not exhausted by close acquaintance. Its simplicity is of the kind in which great subtleties are at home. By these tests it may endure.

Robert Speaight

ONWARD CHRISTIAN BRAHMINS!

Time Must Have a Stop. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. *Chatto and Windus.* 9s. 6d.

This is Mr. Huxley's best novel for a very long time. He has recaptured the gaiety, the conciseness, the passionate interest in human beings, in fact the novelist's attitude which seemed to have eluded him. *Time Must Have a Stop* is admirably constructed; character after character is introduced with casual informality, their repercussions on each other follow with the intricacy of a chess opening. The scene is Florence, and all Huxley's youthful love and knowledge of Italy reappear. The book is bright and sunpierced and there is a happiness such as is seldom found in his later work in descriptions like that of the young poet's arrival at the villa in a car by night, or his morning meditation in the garden. And an unfailing sense of comedy. Except for too many flashes of the old vulgarity in style Mr. Huxley seems to have been born again.

Walter Barnack, puritanical liberal, whose pretty wife ran away from him, is the father of Sebastian, an adolescent genius, beautiful, self-conscious, arrogant, innocently sensual, a poet of a second-rate Jacobethan order, nurtured on *Wheels*. (His poems had been better left to the imagination.) Walter refuses him a dinner jacket, because the sons of the Welsh miners go without them, and Sebastian goes to stay with his æsthetic uncle Eustace, an elderly hedonist, in Florence. Eustace promises him a Degas drawing, then dies miserably, as hedonists do, and Sebastian, who sells the drawing to buy his dinner jacket, sets a train of evil in motion which impounds his saintly cousin Bruno in a concentration camp and leads to his own seduction by the oval-faced libidinous Mrs. Thwale. Lessons learnt in these hectic days bear fruit many years later, when Sebastian, saved from the duty-complex of his father, the pleasure-addiction of his uncle, and the nymphomania of Mrs. Thwale, is also on his way to sanctity. All the usual Huxleyan characters are here (including a particularly well-drawn rich old woman, Eustace's mother-in-law) but spring-cleaned, freshened up, recreated through a firmer satiric draughtsmanship, a wiser intuition, a deeper moral sense. The social comedy is magnificently reinforced by the spiritual tragedy. Heaven now exists as well as earth. Uncle Eustace dies of heart failure in the lavatory, but in chapter 13 his sensations after death are described in a remarkable piece of writing, an experiment which aims at indicating a completely depersonalised experience in appropriate language. By a most ingenious use of the séance a relationship is maintained between Uncle Eustace and the living. The conflict goes on.

The only technical flaw in the novel is the introduction into the epilogue of Sebastian's note-book, which is the inevitable Huxleyan device for releasing his didactic essayist vein. Deeply interesting though these reflections are they spoil the objectiveness of the rest of the novel and slow down its tempo.

As a work of propaganda *Time Must Have a Stop* is much more than a novel. It is a religious tract. The doctrines of the Hollywood community of mystics are now bearing fruit, and the Sacred Books are appearing. They include the recent works of Gerald Heard, Isherwood's translation of the Gita, Maugham's *Razor's Edge* and Huxley's *Grey Eminence*. In Maugham's novel the worldly old hedonist Elliot Templeton and the amorous Isabel are confronted by the young Neo-Brahmin, Larry (identified with Isherwood by *Time Magazine*). Larry resists both the fleshpots of Templeton and the passions of Isabel. Sebastian is frailer and younger—besides, Uncle Eustace is much more than a mere snob, and Mrs. Thwale is more sure of what she wants than the conventional Isabel. Huxley's thought is far closer to Heard's than to Maugham's. Both make free use of such expressions as transcendent and immanent. In *The Recollection* (1944) Heard writes:

> Contentment becomes whole when it is realised that Here there is neither Past nor Future, but only and always Now. Eternity touches time only and always at the instant. . . . The soul should and can be now and always without Regret or Remorse.

Huxley (*page* 276):

> The life of the spirit is life exclusively in the present, never in the past or future: life here, now, not life looked forward to or recollected. There is absolutely no room in it for pathos or remorse. . . .

The new Californian religion appears to be an eclectic faith which combines elements of Quakerism, Jansenism, Catholic Mysticism, Yoga Mysticism, and orthodox Brahmanism. The Transmigration of Souls seems an official tenet, with the concept of Dharma, Kharma and Nirvana, of the essential vanity and evil of existence—but also of the conflict between evil and good. God is good, but impersonal, yet the Divine Ground or the Light, as Huxley calls it, suffers at our wickedness and responds to prayer. The new faith produces good books. So does Existentialism, the Devil's Brew which Central Europe has served up. In Huxley's tract the good triumph, at least in inward happiness, and the wicked are punished. Uncle Eustace in fact literally goes to Hell. On what grounds? He dies at 53 because he is a frivolous and self-indulgent sensualist; but because he refuses to let his personality be liquidated after death and rejects absorption in the Divine Ground he is condemned to eternal remorse and the repetition of inane blasphemies and sensualities with reincarnation as the only alternative. Rarely does a modern novelist condemn a character to Hell and describe his torment. Let us look closer at the wicked Eustace, and anatomise his sins. We will take a typical vice and follow it through the tractarian treatment.

Page 10:—

> Sebastian (17) has smoked his first cigar and been made sick by it. He runs away when offered another.

Page 38:—

> Uncle Eustace appears: As seen by his sister: The damp mobile looseness of that mouth, its combination of servility and babyishness, of the infantile with the epicurean.

Page 51:—

> Fascinated, Sebastian looked on, while his Uncle Eustace lighted the massive Romeo and Juliet. . . . First the ritual of piercing; then, as he raised the cigar to his mouth, the smile of happy anticipation. Damply, lovingly, the lips closed over the butt; the match was ignited; he pulled at the flame. And instantly Sebastian was reminded of his cousin Marjorie's baby, nuzzling with blind concupiscence for the nipple, seizing it at last between the soft prehensile flaps of its little mouth and working away, working away in a noiseless frenzy of enjoyment. True, Uncle Eustace had rather better manners; and in this case the nipple was coffee-coloured and six inches long. Images floated up before his mind's-eye; words, grotesque and mock-heroic, started to arrange themselves:
>
> Old but an infant, mouthing with lustful lip
> The wet brown teat, incarnate where he sucks,
> Of some imaginary, largest queen
> of all the Hottentots. . . .

Same page:—

> Eustace took the tobacco-teat from between his lips and smiled indulgently.

Page 57:—

> Eustace took the teat out of his mouth. . . .

Page 62:—

A glutton's last day.

> Breakfast: Grapes, porridge, two poached eggs on toast, a kipper, scones, marmalade.

Page 64:—

First Cigar:—

> He lit his cigar [a small Larranaga] and leaned back savouring the delicate lusciousness of its aroma.

Page 88:—

> Lunch: Lasagne Verdi (farinaceous), creamed breasts of turkey, Chianti (one bottle between two).

Page 92:—

Second Cigar:—

> He selected a cigar and prepared to light it. . . . He sucked at the burning match, and the smoke gushed from his nostrils.

Page 93:—

> Eustace took the cigar from between his lips and blew out a cloud of smoke.

Afternoon:—

> Visit to Bruno, the saintly book-seller. "Looking up, he saw the broad, sagging face, with its pouchy eyes and its loosely smiling, unweaned lips of Eustace Barnack. And he perceived the man as entombed, as coffined away from the light, as immured in an impenetrable privation of beatitude." An afternoon of mild flagellation with his mistress follows. No tea.

Dinner:—

> Filleted sole (two helpings).
> Creamed chicken.
> Chocolate soufflé. Cream.
> Coffee.
> Roederer 1916 (one bottle between two).

Page 122:—

> He helped himself to a Romeo and Juliet. Damply, lovingly, the unweaned lips closed on the object of their desire. He sucked at the flame of the little silver lamp, and a moment later the teat was yielding its aromatic milk, his mouth was full of smoke.

Page 124:—

> Brandy. Two helpings.

Page 126:—

> Third brandy. He took a sip, and rolled the spirit round his mouth; on tongue and palate it consummated the happiest of marriages with the clinging aroma of his cigar.

Page 128:—

> He removed the teat from between his large damp lips to take another sip of brandy.

Page 129:—

> He took another swig of brandy, then sucked voluptuously at his cigar.

Page 130:—

> Taking the cigar out of his mouth, he gave vent to a long peal of wheezy laughter.

Page 131:—

> He reinserted the teat.

Page 132:—

> Eustace put down his cigar (in the lavatory).

Page 133:—

> Face downwards on the tiled floor, he continued to gasp for a little, more and more stertorously. But there was no air; only a smell of cigar-smoke.

I am smoking a cigar as I write this. (A small British-made teat, called Rothschild.) My sagging lips mumble it lasciviously. I look up cigars in the Encyclopædia and find that they became popular in this country about 1840. Fifty years later cigarettes were introduced. And a page of wholesome statistics follow—wholesome because they recall the fact that the rolling of the tobacco leaf entire has for long been considered the most practical way of preparing it. The onslaught on Eustace is almost neurotic. Three brandies and two glasses of champagne will not kill a man of 53, even with a Romeo and Juliet thrown in—and the abstemious Eustace avoids cocktails, whisky, port, beer and aperitives. A solid breakfast—yes—but a two-course lunch and a three-course dinner. Perhaps a little too much cream, but let anyone who can truly say that they would refuse such a day's rations cast the first stone!

Why is Eustace really punished? Because he is immensely dangerous. Beauty is very dangerous to God. Jehovah in the Talmud forbade the Jews to look at a tree. Æsthetics are offensive to mysticism, hedonism to Christianity. Art is its own religion, which gradually develops in its worshippers a system of ethics and a set of beliefs; one cannot love art and not be changed. Huxley has known this and makes Eustace not a Flaubert but a rich dilettante who collects bric-à-brac, can't finish a book, jumbles up masterpieces with clothes and cooking, a Mr. Norris in the *train-de-luxe*. The caricaturing of him, the faith of Lucretius and Montaigne, behind which he shelters, is caricatured also. And in the end Eustace is punished by the Light for something very like blasphemy, and a Ground which punishes for that is all too human! Huxley is manifesting the intolerance which is often the first visible consequence of a religious conversion.

"The habit of sensuality and pure æstheticism," writes Sebastian in his note-book, "is a process of God-proofing. To indulge in it is to become a spiritual mackintosh, shielding the little corner of time, of which one was the centre, from the least drop of eternal reality."

But they are not one habit but two habits, and to ignore the connection between the pure love of beauty and the apprehension of eternal reality is to deny the whole contribution of Art, of Greece, and Chartres and Rome and Byzantium. A denial which reflects itself in many dreadful phrases, in Uncle Eustace in Hell, "the iron teeth combing and carding the very substance of his being. For ever and ever, excruciatingly."

As a moralist Huxley uses characters to illustrate vices. Mrs. Ockham with her mother-love, Mrs. Thwale with her lust, the mother-in-law clinging selfishly to life, Walter Barnack to left-wing publicity, Mr. Weil to art-dealing—they are one-dimensional, and their pleasures but serve to illustrate their retribution. The warm air of healthy instinct, of affectionate kindness, of fatuous hope and unconscious delight in existence which makes up the human climate is something which Mr. Huxley has always disliked and ignored. Hence his overestimate of the extent of human misery. Yet for its sake people go on living. Mr. Huxley may damn them for it, but we have no evidence that the Divine Ground will. Mr. Huxley puts Sensuality as his besetting sin, but he suffers from one which is far more dangerous in a Reformer—Dyspepsia.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

THE EVER-CHANGING LAND

Ploughman's Folly By EDWARD FAULKNER. *Michael Joseph.* 8s. 6d.

Four Years' Harvest. By FRANCES DONALDSON. *Faber & Faber.* 7s. 6d.

On the face of it, there could hardly be two books with a more different approach to agriculture. The one is written by an American farmer about American farming to demonstrate that all this stuff about ploughing and digging the land is a lot of hooey, and it is sufficient to scratch its surface, provided that green manure is "disced" into it; the other is to relate the experiences of a woman who, without farming experience, took on a farm in Warwickshire when her husband left for service overseas in the present war.

Yet the more one thinks of them, the more these two books coalesce to point a common moral. It is that there are no cut-and-dried answers to the problems that daily confront the world's thousand million or so food producers; that even when an answer seems to have been found it is not unchallengeable and may have to be modified after five, twenty or a hundred years' experience; and that, in dealing with a living, changing entity such as the land and the plants and animals that it bears, absolute knowledge is non-existent, and every farmer worthy of the name must be learning and experimenting all the time.

This is something to be remembered at this present moment in agricultural history, when on the one hand the agricultural scientists and engineers have paved the way to a farming revolution that is in the process of occurring, and, on the other, there is every prospect that farming of the future will come under some system of control as drastic as anything we have known since the heyday of the great landowners around the beginnings of the last century. If we are to have control (and no one above the mental age of ten years can seriously question this inevitable necessity) its form must be sufficiently flexible to take account of agriculture's living, growing, eternal changeability, and it must give scope to the individual to make his own experiments and his own mistakes. But also farmers themselves must have this open approach to knowledge and be ready to scrap preconceived ideas and adopt not only new technical methods, but also (far more difficult) new ways of thinking.

Personally I have far fewer doubts about the flexibility of farmers than the flexibility of controls. Contrary to general belief, farmers and their methods have been in a constant state of flux during the whole of this century, changing from one extreme to another. Before the last war they were taking part in a mild change towards more milk production and less grain-growing. Then, in 1916, they had to change violently to corn and potato growing. Long before this could be completed they had to change back again, and, as the problem of food imported at less than its production cost became steadily worse, they had to devise a whole new system of processing cheap imported feeding stuffs to keep them from bankruptcy. Just as they were getting accustomed to this the present war came, with the need to convert practically the whole country from a pastoral to an arable system of farming. This they did, with hopelessly inadequate supplies of labour, machinery and knowledge, in two years. Now we are gradually turning away from corn and back to livestock again, only once more on the basis of a technique entirely new to the average farmer, the technique of ley farming. Within this series of farming revolutions have been all sorts of minor ones, such as the instructions blandly sent out by the Ministry of Agriculture to bull cows in February so that they may calve in the autumn, in spite of the fact that both Nature and the cow take a poor view of this, and frequently insist that spring and the new grass mark the correct time for calves to come into the world.

Nor has this been unaccompanied by changes in the way of thinking among farmers. It is now fairly well known, although her remarks in a rather unnecessary last chapter seem to indicate that it has missed Mrs. Donaldson, that there is a genuine desire for knowledge stirring in the rank and file of farmers that has not been equalled for a hundred years or more. The discussion groups, Growmore Clubs, farm walks and machinery pools that have sprung up spontaneously all over rural Britain are only one indication of this. The typical farmer, as distinct from professional committee-goers and those who write letters to the Press, are, I venture to say, quite prepared to accept to-day the principle of control, provided it is sensibly administered. And when the N.F.U. rebukes an economist because, they say, he takes an insular view in disregarding the fortunes of farmers overseas, and when the acting President of that Union impresses upon farmers that they exist to serve the nation and to give it the food that it requires both in war *and* in peace, well, surely that is a revolution in thought and a sign that we really are getting somewhere.

These two books go well together because they are both stimulating against this ever-changing background. Mr. Faulkner's book about ploughing will chiefly interest farmers. It should not be taken too seriously. It is based upon the utterly different conditions of soil and climate in the U.S., and he builds his theory upon the experience of two years. Now two years' experience on one farm to knock over the knowledge gained by practice through forty centuries of farming all over the world is just ridiculous. Nevertheless, some of what he says does tally with some research recently carried out at Rothamsted Experimental Station in England. There, as Dr. B. A. Keen has demonstrated, some of the cultivations formerly regarded as essential to good farming cannot be justified by the results in yield, —at Rothamsted. Other experts disagree with this, and, as Professor H. G. Sanders has pointed out, the soil has a most baffling habit of giving one result in experimental plots and quite different results in general practice. But it is good that the accepted things should be questioned from time to time, and it is at least possible that modern farm machinery and other advances have reduced

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the necessity for cultivations regarded as essential in days of cheap labour and slow-moving horse implements.

Mrs. Donaldson's book comes in a very different category. First I would recommend it to the townsman because it is good reading and presents a true picture of life on the farm. Here is an obviously intelligent woman who writes with humour and warm understanding. She went to Gypsy Farm in what I can best describe as an attitude of masterful humility. She was determined to win through and beat the endless problems that the farm presented, but she did not disdain to listen to what Gypsy Farm had to teach her. She wrestled and fought with it. Time and again it got her down; she got up smiling and returned to the attack. Many a time she cursed it and the day she was ever fool enough to try to tame it, but, in the strange way these things happen, the more she fought and was baffled and came back again, having learnt something, the more she loved the farm and the life it offered her. Of such stuff true farmers are made, and it is something that cannot be acquired at any agricultural college. She is dead right when she warns newcomers to the land not to be put off by those who pretend that the land is something sacred, not to be meddled with by those not born to the job. There is no mystery about farming, except the mystery of life itself. The land is there waiting to respond to good management and common sense, and although a modicum of technical knowledge is necessary to avoid catastrophic mistakes, the best results will come when the farmer can combine the gift of the good organiser with the ability to learn quickly the unceasing lessons that the land has to teach. Nature will co-operate, but refuses to be compelled. That is what gives the farming life a fascination that Mrs. Donaldson has imparted to her book. L. F. EASTERBROOK

POPLIT

Soviet Stories of the Last Decade. Selected and Translated by ELISAVETA FEN. *Methuen.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It is doubtless very difficult for an English reader to judge Soviet literature at all fairly; faced with this collection of contemporary Soviet short stories, which Miss Fen has admirably translated, he is bound to begin judging them by English standards. That is easy. The stories are nowhere very subtle, and one's first feeling is that one has to contract whatever sensibilities one may have in order to appreciate the mood and attitude of the various writers. To an English reader, two stories will stand out: *South Bound*, by A. G. Malyshkin, and *The Sea Breeze*, by I. Sokolov-Nikitov. The first is about a clerk making a long, nostalgic train-journey through the landscape he fought in during the civil war, the second about two Arab stowaways attempting to get into the Soviet Union. It is worth remarking that these stories, both of them rich in atmosphere and skilful in characterisation, are much more readable and entertaining than most stories in our own literary magazines. Other stories are interesting for their unusual scene: *The Trial of a Comrade*, by B. Gorbatov, and *The Commandant of the Isle of Birds*, by Serghei Dikovsky. One story, *Raw Stuff*, by A. Dolgigh, defeats even Miss Fen's efforts to extract distinction from it. The only author at all well-known in England, Ilya Ehrenburg, contributes *The Call*, a machine-made fabrication about the Spanish Civil War, written in a mannered *staccato*, fashionable by now all over the world and capable of conferring banality on the most promising material.

These are the kind of judgments an English reader might be expected to make. On consideration, one begins to think about the book in other ways. The pre-war stories are generally the best, and since they are about "workers," one begins to contrast them with what used here to be called proletarian literature. This literature drew a good deal of its power from a sombre dissatisfaction, expressed or implied, with a regime. In Russia, however, there appears to be increasing satisfaction with the way things are going, and it is doubtful if satisfaction gives a writer much to bite on. Life does not exist in order to provide material for literature, and no one would wish Russia to return to Tsarism in order to give young writers a background for profounder short stories; but the scene in the U.S.S.R. before 1942 has here provided material mainly for genial *scherzi*, some of them rather sentimentally complacent, about the contrast between the past and the present, about the conversion and regeneration of the doubting or the recalcitrant, and so on. These themes strike one as having no more than topical interest; and the ephemeral nature of most of the stories here is very marked. So is the element of propaganda, which can be detected in every single tale. But one cannot say only that about it, for it does repeatedly occur to one that the author may really be drawing life as he sees it. We need not think of these writers as having, one and all, been "bought up"; in England, intellectuals are almost invariably hostile to the Government, so that it is difficult for us to imagine the feeling of intellectuals who largely approve of their rulers.

What strikes one most is that these stories are aimed at a far wider variety of readers than most English stories are. It is, after all, not long since the vast majority of Russians learned to read. Inevitably they demand literature, and most of them a literature not over-subtle. At the same time there is presumably no source from which the low types of literature such as the snob-novelette, and the more or less pornographic thrillers of England and America can be drawn. Perhaps even the cravings which these satisfy are not there in Russia; one hopes not—it is pleasant to think of a civilisation which, even if it accepts the best of modern Western literature with suspicion and reluctance, at least can dispense with the phantasies of *Peg's Paper* and *No Orchids*. In their place there are stories such as these. And that is the final point which seems to emerge from this volume. It is popular literature, ephemeral, sometimes artificial, and rarely without naïvety; but at any rate it is a stimulant and not a dope.

HENRY REED.

FUTURE HOMES

Target For Tomorrow. No. 9. The Rehousing of Britain. By JOHN MADGE. Foreword by Sir William Beveridge. *The Pilot Press.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

This is a capital book. In about 40 pages of print, illustrated by useful graphs and 33 fine photographs, is a clear and concise statement of the present housing position in Britain, what needs to be done, and the factors essential to achievement. It is a text book for the ordinary reader, well worth 4s. 6d. to the citizen who earnestly desires a home for his neighbour as well as for himself.

A vivid picture justifying the word chaos as applied to town and country living conditions in Britain before the war, and a brief review of housing successes and failures in the 1919-1939 period, is followed by facts and illustrations of three different types of effort in housing and planning: the great massed blocks of 938 flats at Quarry Hill, Leeds, with their fine equipment, services and communal facilities; the satellite garden town of Wythenshaw, achievement of Manchester City Corporation; and Welwyn Garden City, the work of a public company inspired by the concept of Ebenezer Howard. The review of present problems takes up many of the same

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SATISFACTORY PROFIT AND SOUND POSITION

THE annual general meeting of British Tyre and Rubber Company, Ltd., was held on Wednesday, March 28, at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.

SIR WALROND SINCLAIR, K.B.E., the chairman, said, in part: "I would mention that the actual trading profit, before providing taxation of any kind, compares favourably with the previous year and is regarded by your directors as very satisfactory, as the year under review constituted a testing period such as we have never before encountered.

"At the beginning of the year the technicians of the rubber industry were almost exclusively engaged in endeavouring to substitute synthetic rubber for the natural product. At that time continuous research and numerous experiments had been effected under high pressure. I am pleased to report that we did not fail the national requirements, and the fact that the trading results for the year compare favourably with its predecessor, represents, in my opinion, a very solid achievement.

"As regards the subsidiary companies, the net return in dividends over the year was again approximately 4 per cent., or equivalent to 8 per cent. gross. All these companies are successfully fulfilling their allotted tasks, and we have never had to report a trading loss by any subsidiary.

"The balance-sheet discloses a sound position. It has been built up steadily over a number of years and, moreover, it does not contain any intangible assets. Such assets as goodwill, trade marks, brands, etc., were written off over a series of years until they disappeared entirely from the balance-sheet on September 30, 1941. Our liquid resources are substantial and our stocks equally satisfactory."

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

points as are emphasised by Sir Ernest Simon in *The Rebuilding of Britain*, and, like him, Mr. Madge lays stress on the importance of research and tests. The appointment of Sir Reginald Stradling and his staff for this work, announced since the book was published, is a hopeful sign. "The gaps in our knowledge," comments Mr. Madge, "are not confined to questions of land utilisation or to questions of economic stability." In an interesting passage on technological advance he goes on:

> . . . quite ordinary organic materials can be transformed by an elaborate but intrinsically simple chain of processes into products whose properties have been chosen in advance as most suited for any particular purpose. . . . Metallurgical science now enables us to select alloys whose properties for particular functions are far superior to those of any simple metal. What is more, it is now possible to control the structure of the product, so that a material can, for example, incorporate a fibrosity which gives it added tensile strength in one direction or can be prepared in a cellular form which is light in weight and good for purposes of insulation.

This paragraph, although hardly technical, is more difficult than most of the book, because it deals with a subject which cannot be discussed in simpler language. It is a great merit of Mr. Madge's work that in dealing with such subjects as finance, the supply of labour and materials for building, temporary buildings and building technique, no less than in his historical survey, he reveals a gift for sifting significant facts from a mass of data and presenting them in readable form.

To many readers that section of the book which compares the statements on Housing by four political Parties will be particularly interesting. These comparisons are honest, and full enough on such vital questions as finance and the future of controls to give a clear indication of each Party's intentions. The ominous chapter, "The Government Intends," embodying long quotations from Ministerial speeches, ends justly, but too gently, with "Time to perfect details is as essential on the local as on the national scale, but unless the framework is provided soon the spirit is liable to evaporate or to decompose again into the sectional interests from which it has been synthesised." Government reports, "Other Countries" and "Target" make up the concluding chapters of the book. The fundamental necessity for "direction by national control rather than by local or by private interests" is again emphasised, but the method of clear statement and no morals drawn is sustained: the author, eschewing cynicism, implies that he really thinks, even now, that such direction will be forthcoming. May Mr. Madge be right! Present indications are in the opposite direction. Government spokesmen, making frantic efforts to get houses built before the position of the homeless becomes dangerous, at the same time put forward the legitimate plea that labour and materials have so far not been available, that sufficient labour will not be available until after the end of the war in Europe, and that labour cannot be mobilised in a moment. This is no answer to the charge against them. It is vision that is lacking—a long-term planning policy to provide a framework for immediate programmes, a settlement of the land compensation problem and a Land Act implementing the Uthwatt or similar proposals, and adequate Exchequer assistance for housing and planning.

But if readers of Mr. Madge's book cannot wholly share the author's optimism, he gives them valuable material from which to form their own judgments. His book is attractive and stimulating, and, in spite of its slightness, an important addition to any reference library on Housing and Planning.

IRENE T. BARCLAY

Week-end Competition

No. 793

Competition Set by Raymond Mortimer

"Fifteen-year-old Maureen Baldwin," the *Daily Herald* informs us, "is Britain's youngest pin-up girl. She was elected Ashburton Pin-up Girl at a dance held by the Welcome Home Committee formed by Ashburton Urban Council. She will attend all functions organised by the Welcome Home Committee."

Prizes of four guineas are offered for the best comment, in not more than 200 words, by Dr. Johnson or Queen Victoria.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 789

Set by C. Urchin

The usual prizes are offered for a monologue (limit 150 words) from Mrs. G., a snob hostess, confronted in her doorway by a figure who *may* be the well-known authoress she has tried to hook for her tea-party, or, equally well, the new maid sent on to her by Lady X. Not for worlds would she offend either; and her visitor is obviously unforthcoming.

Report by C. Urchin

This competition was obviously not at all easy. One couldn't get round it or display great originality; only an accumulation of nice touches would do the trick. Most competitors found an impetuous tact the easiest to manage. Some of the ambiguities were charming. "Lady X, I think it was, first told me about you—we have similar tastes, you know—and we both remarked on the skilful use you make of a broad brush, sweeping everything before you and leaving all tidy and finished at the end, so to speak" (Douglas Harrison). "Do sit down. Just this once. What am I saying?" (S. W. G.). "Dear Lady X . . . probably you have assisted at her literary evenings? Such a privilege . . ." (Towanbucket). Almost no competitor succeeded, after playing a double game, in contriving a formula that would decide the issue. Besides those already quoted, S. A. Cooper, Stanley J. Sharpless, Able-Seaman J. R. Till, were in the running. Winners: Donald H. Whitmore and Moo (name and address, please), dividing the prizes equally.

PRIZES

"Ah! *So* good of you to come. *Do* have some tea. Now I *do* hope you'll feel able to stop, though of course you must be *terribly* in demand. Dear Lady X was telling me only yesterday how wonderful she thinks your work is, so *clean*, too, if you'll forgive me, and I fear we can't say that of some in your profession, can we? As this is your first time here, perhaps you'd like to look round afterwards. It's quite a small house, though, which makes the work *very* easy, by the way. I'm afraid there's rather a mob here to-day—another time you'll find it much nicer, far fewer people to cope with. Of course we couldn't *always* expect you to oblige us with your presence, your work must absolutely *demand* considerable periods of *sheer* relaxation." (Pauses with a fixed enquiring smile.)

DONALD H. WHITMORE

MONOLOGUE IN A FLAT

"Oh! Good afternoon—how perfectly *splendid* of you to come. You are, of course, yes, of *course* you are. And *how* is Lady X? Er, you must know her so well, such a dear friend of mine, and what a help I always think, to have a mutual er . . . who is a member of the *real* aristocracy.

"Now come along in; you will just make *all* the difference to my tea party. I was so very interested in reading your ref., what *do* I mean, er, criti. . . . I thought they were so inspiringly satisfactory.

"Let me take your coat, *do*, you know I have absolutely no maids, and to think before the war we had six. What is England coming to? But after all it is *only* the people like you who can save our sanitry—I *must* mean sanity."

Moo

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WANTED, unfurnished s.c. flat, 2/3 rooms, kit., bath, Bloomsbury. Box 8120.

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LABOUR Monthly, 6*d*. Post Paid, 7*d*. Annual subscription: Gt. Britain, 7*s*.; Abroad, 8*s*.; from Publishers, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3. April issue includes "Election Prospects," by R.P.D.; a Symposium on the Crimea Conference by M.P.s; Brailsford's reply to Ehrenburg: also articles by Quaestor, Margot Heinemann.

Entertainments

TORCH Theatre. Richard Morris presents "Curtain Up." Shakespeare, Drama, Music, Verse. April 9th–14th, 7 p.m. EAL. 1629, 10–5. Seats 3*s.* 6*d.*, 5*s.*, 7*s.* 6*d.* Mems. only.

UNITY, Goldington St., N.W.1. "The Yellow Star," written and produced by Ted Willis. Fri., Sat., Sun., 7.30. Mat., 3.30. Mems. only. Ann. subscription, 2*s.* Eus. 5391.

CHANTICLEER Theatre Club, Clareville St., S.W.7. Last 2 perfs. "When We Dead Awaken," Fri., Sat. at 7. 3rd Play of Ibsen Season, from Saturday, 14th, at 7: "John Gabriel Borkman." Wed. to Fri. at 7, Sat., Sun. at 3 and 7. 6*s.*, 3*s.* 6*d.*, 2*s.* 6*d.* Memships. 2*s.* 6*d.*–£1 1*s.* KEN. 5845.

ARTS (TEM. 7544). Evgs. (ex. Mon.), 7. Sat. & Sun., 2.30 & 7. Bernard Shaw's "The Simpleton." Mems. only. Thr. mems. 5*s.*

3-WEEK Season of Orchestral Concerts at Coliseum, Charing Cross, com. Mon., 9th. London Philharmonic Orchestra. Nightly at 7. Send 1*d.* and stpd. addrd. env. for complete prospectus. Progs. inc., in addition to popular repertoire, Symph. by Shostakovich, Sibelius, Walton, Piano Concertos by Chopin, Ravel, &c.

COMMITTEE for the Promotion of New Music. 47th Studio Recital of Chamber Music followed by discussion. Chair: Arnold Goldsbrough. Tuesday, 10th, 6.30 p.m., at Fyvie Hall, Regent St. Polytechnic, London, W.1. Adm. free.

STRINDBERG'S "Easter," with Esme Percy as Lindkirst, nightly at 7 p.m. until April 14th. The Gateway Theatre, 18 Chepstow Villas, W.11. Partics. 'phone BAY. 7444.

WIGMORE Hall, April 14th, 2.30. Chamber Orchestral Concert. Conductor: Rudolph Fischer. Gluck, Haydn, Ireland, Bach, Hindemith. Soloists: Shula Doniach, Susan Rozsa, John Francis. 10*s.* 6*d.*, 7*s.* 6*d.*, 5*s.*, 3*s.*, at Hall. Wel. 2141.

GERALD Cooper Chamber Concerts in aid of Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Wigmore Hall. Tues. next, 6.45. Programme of Old Music. Works by Scarlatti, Bach. Artists: Margaret Ritchie, Roy Henderson, Alfred Hepworth, Victor Watson, The Ebsworth String Quartet. Tickets, 7*s.* 6*d.*, 5*s.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, at Hall and Ibbs & Tillett, 124 Wigmore St.

ROYAL Albert Hall, Tues. Evngs., at 7. April 10th, 17th, 24th. National Symphony Orchestra. Cond.: Sidney Beer. Tues. next, April 10th, at 7 p.m., works by Mozart, Mahler. Artists: Mary Jarred, Parry Jones. 10*s.* 6*d.*, 7*s.* 6*d.*, 5*s.*, 4*s.*, 3*s.* 6*d.*, Hall (Ken. 3661), Agents and Ibbs and Tillett, 124 Wigmore St.

REIZENSTEIN Piano Recital, Wigmore Hall, April 17th, 6.30. Bach, Mozart, Reizenstein (1st perf.), Schubert, Debussy. 9*s.*, 6*s.*, 3*s.*, from Hall (Wel. 2141)/Musical Culture, Ltd., 53 Welbeck St., W.1.

LONDON Philharmonic Arts Club, Fyvie Hall, Polytechnic, Upper Regent St., W.1. April 12th, 6.30, Contra Tenor Recorders in programme of Bach, Purcell, Hindemith and 1st perfs. of Antony Hopkins Concerto and W. Bergemann Quintet. 24 illus. University Extsn. lectures by Shula Doniach "Music and the Piano," April 9th, 6.30. "Weber: Schubert—The Romantic Movement." Applics. for membshp. to Sec., 53 Welbeck St., W.1. (Wel. 1259).

Exhibitions, Lectures and Meetings

NEW Spring Exhibition of Early English Water Colours now on view at Heal's, 196 Tottenham Ct. Rd., W.1.

PETER Jones Gallery. Till April 11th. Paintings, Alicia Boyle. Miscellaneous works, Mary Adshead, Stephen Bone, Geoffrey Rhoades, Elizabeth Spurr. Sloane Sq., S.W.1.

REALITY and Vision in 3 centuries of English Drawing—Roland, Browse and Delbanco, 19 Cork St., W.1. 10-5, incl. Sats.

HENRY Moore, bronze groups, terracottas and drawings. Matthew Smith, paintings of various periods. H. Morton Colville, paintings. Berkeley Galleries, 20 Davies Street, W.1.

PORTRAITS from 1500 to 1850, at the Arcade Gallery, Royal Arcade, 28 Old Bond St., 10–5. Sats., 10–1, until April 14th.

PAINTINGS by J. Bauernfreund. Czechoslovak Institute, 18 Grosvenor Pl., S.W.1. April 6th–25th, 10.30–4 (closed Suns.). Free.

BEAUX Arts Gallery, 1 Bruton Place, W. Paintings by children from Bedales and Burgess Hill. April 6th to 26th, 10.30–4.30. Sats. 10.30–1.

MANCHESTER. Water-colours by Harold Hemingway at Mrs. Wertheim's Midday Studio, 96 Mosley St., Apr. 10th–24th (not Saturdays), 10.30–3.30.

LEFEVRE Gallery, 131/134 New Bond St., W.1. New works by Francis Bacon, Frances Hodgkins, Henry Moore, Matthew Smith, Graham Sutherland. Daily 10–5.30. Sats., 10–1.

VERY Attractive and Colourful Pastels by artist, in Continental Style, at Alfred Wilson's, 14 High St., Hampstead, N.W.3.

INTERNATIONAL Arts Centre, 3 Orme Square, Bayswater Rd. Apr. 10th, Sidney Cole, "Problems of Film Production." 13th, Michael Rachlis, "Mural Painting in Contemporary Architecture." Both 8 p.m.

"THE Path to Unity." Introductory talk and discussion, Bahá'í Centre, 1 Victoria St., S.W.1. April 8th, 3.30 p.m. Speaker, R. St. Barbe Baker.

APRIL 15th, 3 p.m., Conway Hall. "Making the Past Come to Life." Prof. Gordon Childe. Tkts., 2*s.* at door or from Marx Hse., 1 Doughty St., W.C.1.

"UNITY or Chaos." Mrs. Adelaide Gardner. Theosophical Soc., 50 Gloucester Pl., W.1. April 8th, 6 p.m. Collection.

Lectures—continued

ETHICAL Church, Queensway, W.2. April 8th, 11 a.m., John Murphy: "Albert Schweitzer, Scholar and Apostle."

SPEECH Fellowship, 9 Fitzroy Sq., W.1. April 14th, 2.30. Sagittarius on "Verse Satire: has it a future?" Adm. free. Collection. Tea.

INTERNATIONAL Friendship League, Lon. Br., April 12th, Arnold Whittick (Lecturer to Advisory Council for Educ. to H.M. Forces) on Modern Psychology—"Indications of various Schools of Psychological Thought." Ev. Thurs. from 7 p.m., 19 Dean's Yard, Westminster.

HAMPSTEAD Group—Left Book Club. S. A. Dange (Vice-Pres., India T.U.C.) on "The Working Class of India." Monday, 9th, 8 p.m. 31 Broadhurst Gdns., N.W.6.

YOUTH House Club. Mons. at 7.30 p.m. 9th, Corder Catchpool: "Relief Work Between the Wars"; 16th, G. Katz-Suchy: "The Polish Situation"; 23rd, W. P. Morrell, M.A. (New Zealand), D.Phil. (Oxon.): "The Future of the British Commonwealth"; 30th, W. Hammerschlag: "Austrian Culture." 250 Camden Rd., N.W.1.

PUBLIC Lecture on Theosophy, U.L.T., 17 Gt. Cumberland Pl., Marble Arch. Every Sun., 7 p.m. April 8th, "The Mysteries of Ancient Greece."

FABIAN May School, Llanddulas Hall, nr. Abergele, N. Wales; May 5th–19th. Lectures, film shows, dancing, tennis, etc. Dets. from Fabian Soc., 11 Dartmouth St., S.W.1.

"FOR the Freedom of the Press." Mass meeting at large Holborn Hall, April 15th, 6.45 p.m. Prominent speakers. Adm. free. Freedom Press Defence Cttee.

PROGRESSIVE League Lecture. David Coyle (of U.S.A. Office of War Inf.) on "The T.V.A.—An Experiment in Planning," Thurs., 12th, 7 p.m., at British Drama League, 9 Fitzroy Sq. (Warren St. Stn.). Adm. 1*s.* 6*d.*

ALEXEI Tolstoy Commemoration Evening. Curzon Cinema, Curzon St., W.1. April 17th, 6 p.m. Chair: J. B. Priestley. Spkr.: Desmond MacCarthy. Film: "Peter the Great." Adm. by invit. from S.C.R. Writers Group, 98 Gower St., W.C.1. (Euston 6272.)

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1. Sunday Meetings, 11 a.m. April 8th, John Katz, B.A., "Poets, Priests and Prophets." For reports of lectures see The Monthly Record, by post 4*s.* p.a. Apply Sec.

FABIAN Lunch. Dr. Edith Summerskill, M.P., "Social Security and the Future." Royal Hotel, Woburn Pl., W.C.1, April 17th, 1 p.m. Tkts. 3*s.* 6*d.*, 11 Dartmouth St., S.W.1.

Lecture Courses and Specialised Training

SOVIET Penal System: I, "Historical Background," Apr. 12th. II, "Penal System of R.S.F.S.R.," Apr. 26th. Dr. B. Ecer, London School of Hygiene, Gower St., 6 p.m. Tkts. 2*s.* 6*d.*, from S.C.R., 98 Gower St., W.C.1.

"THE Idea of Man in Modern Philosophy." Morley College, Fridays, 6.30–8.30 (lectures and discussion). Com. April 13th.

PHILOSOPHY. Lectures at Mary Ward Settlement (2 Tavistock Place), Thursdays, 7.30–8.30. New term commencing April 12th.

A.I.A. Centre, 84 Charlotte St. Life Drawing. Sundays, 3–5 p.m. 1*s.*

HOMERTON College, Cambridge. Three and six months' course in youth leadership for women. Term begins May 1st. Applics. should be made immediately to tutor of the course. Bursary help available.

MEDICAL Secretaryships, Institutional Housekeepers, Dietitian-Caterers, Hotel Receptionists, Manageresses, Cert. Bk.-kprs.; success. postal courses. Brochures, 3*d.* Sec., Southern Training College, Brighton, 6.

BOYANUS School of Russian, 44 Museum St., W.C.1 (above Sidgwick & Jackson). Summer Term begins April 24th. Classes for students all grades. Beginners' group starting April 25th. All partics. from Sec.

Schools and Educational

BEDALES School, Petersfield, Hants. A progressive public school for boys and girls from 11½–18. Separate jnr. schl., 5-11. (No vacancies at present.) Estate 150 acres. Home farm. Headmaster, F. A. Meier, M.A. (Camb.).

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PUBLIC & Prep. Schls. Yr. Bk. (Boys). Parents wishing consult shd. visit local Library. Owing restrict. on supplies paper, stocks of this official book now exhausted. Deane, 31 Museum St., W.C.1.

Where to Stay

PENARTH. "Vegetarian Home," Rectory Rd. (S. Wales coast). Rest, change, relaxation. Ideal sitn. Plsnt. hol. resort. Overlkg. sea. Attractive catering. Comf., Chrfl., Peacefl. Mod.

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SUNSHINE holidays. Mod. Sunbathers enjoy perfect sunbathing hols. in comfort at Britain's luxury sun club. Fullest facils. for complete sun and air bathing. Write (encl. 1*s.*) for club brochure, Sec. (C), N. Devon Club, Beaworthy, Devon.

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Appointments Vacant and Wanted

None of the vacancies for women advertised in this journal relates to a woman between 18 and 41 unless such a woman (a) has living with her a child of hers under the age of 14, or (b) is registered under the Blind Persons Acts, or (c) has a Ministry of Labour permit to allow her to obtain employment by individual efforts.

OVERWORKED Left-Wing M.P. requires highly competent private secretary. Present one retiring owing to ill-health. Apply, stating salary required and enclosing copies of references, to Box 8530.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Educ. Cttee., Service of Youth. Applics. invited for Youth Leader, full-time, at Sawston Village College. Sal.: man, £275–£12–£384; woman, £275–£9–£306, plus war bonus and travelling expenses. Partics. and applic. form from Chief Educ. Officer, Shire Hall, Cambridge, on receipt stpd. addrd. foolscap env. All applics. retd. by April 18th.

TYNESIDE Council of Social Service. Appointment of Sec. for general social work and club supervision in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Sal. £300–£350 p.a. accord. exp. Further partics. (by post only) from Director, Tyneside Council of Social Service, 17 Ellison Pl., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1. Closing date April 14th.

UNIVERSITY of Glasgow. University Court invite applics. for Lectureship in Political Science. Appointment will be either in Grade IIa or Grade I accord. to qualifics. and exp. of candidate appointed. (Present sal. of these Grades is £540–£775.) Superann. and Family Allowance Schemes in operation. Statement of duties and condits. of appoint. supplied on request to Robt. T. Hutcheson, Sec. of University Court, with whom applics. should be lodged by May 31st. Arrangements will be made to defer entry upon tenure if successful candid. is engaged in war service.

YOUTH Leaders, part-time. Reading (woman) and Maidenhead (man), for mixed clubs. Full partics. of appointment and pay from Educ. Sec., Reading Co.-op. Soc. Ltd., 14 Copse Ave., Caversham, Reading.

TEMPORARY gardener-handyman (single) wanted by small co-ed. school. Pleasant country, 45 miles London. To share work with one other, April-July inclusive. For further partics. apply Secretary, Fortis Green School, Aspley Guise, Beds.

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BATH Educ. Authority. Bath School of Art, 99 Sydney Pl., Bath. Art Teacher. Applics. invited for this full-time post, opports. of unusual interest. Sal. in accordance with Burnham Scale. Duties commence Sept., or as soon as poss. Applic. forms, to be retd. immediately, from A. W. Hoyle, Dir. of Educ., Educ. Dept., Guildhall, Bath.

GOVERNMENT Evac. Scheme. Assistant to Chief Billeting & Welfare Officer reqd. Sal. up to £200 p.a., plus War Bonus. Applics., stating age and giving full partics., with copies of 2 recent testims., by April 28th to S. L. Chave, Clerk, Wincanton R.D.C., Council Offices, Wincanton.

ROYAL Institute of International Affairs. Council invites applics. for post of Librarian at Chatham House from July 1st. Knowledge French and German. Sal. accord. to qualifics. and exp. Applicants, who must be British should write, The Secretary of Institute, 10 St. James's Sq., London, S.W.1.

EAST Riding of Yorkshire War Agric. Exec. Cttee. req. Warden and Matron (joint appoint.) for Volunteer Agricultural Camp housed in perm. buildings at Cherry Burton, nr. Beverley, May 1st–Sept. 30th. Sal. £200 to £250 p.a., with quarters and board. Applics. with names of two referees as soon as possible to F. F. Taylor, Executive Officer, St. Mary's Manor, Beverley.

SIR Kenneth Clark wants Coach for son aged 12, Latin & Maths., 4 hrs. wkly., for 3 wks. in Easter hols. Write only, Upper Terrace House, Hampstead, N.W.3.

"THE Racing Pigeon," 19 Doughty St., W.C.1, reqs. shthd.-typist, whole or part-time; good sal., permanent post.

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MARKET Research. Women investigators required for occasional work in London and Home Counties. Apply Box 8001.

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Appointments—continued

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WANTED: Jacoby's "Analysis of Handwriting"; illustrated periodicals, old prints, newspapers, etc., any date, all subjects (for educational work); 2nd-hand books, any good literature, Everymans; Bradley's "Book of the Severn"; Langland's Works (edited Skeat); L. L. Despard, Text-book of Massage; Thorburn's "British Birds," 4 vols.; Virginals/small Harpsichord; Portable typewriter; standard typewriter, would exchange portable Imperial and cash; Swan pen, recent model; large Bergan frame rucksack; hip bath in good condition.

Send no money or goods in reply to the advertisements, but write first to N.S. & N. Readers' Market, 10 Great Turnstile, mentioning advt. and details (separate letter for each item). Charge under this heading 1s. 6d. first word, 9d. a word after, including forwarding replies.

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More Classified Advertisements on page 231.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VIENNA

THE tale of Allied successes mounts apace. On the Eastern Front the fall of Königsberg, with its powerful garrison of crack troops, has been followed by the capture, after stiff fighting, of Vienna. In the West, though the leading Allied columns are now far from their rail-head supplies, the momentum of the advance has been, on the whole, maintained: Hanover has fallen, and the invading forces are on the outskirts of Magdeburg and Weimar. Farther south they are closing steadily, if more slowly, on Nuremberg and Stuttgart. With the bulk of the Luftwaffe immobilised by fuel shortage, the enemy's land forces in the West have largely lost cohesion; and, though the number of relatively intact divisions still facing the Russians between Stettin and Silesia may be considerable, a final offensive by Marshals Zhukov and Koniev should rapidly lead to an Allied junction round Berlin.

Yet, as the curtains fall in the Wehrmacht, Nazi plans for a "five minutes past twelve" resistance continue to take shape on lines foreshadowed weeks ago in these columns. Bavaria and northern Italy—scene of the latest Allied offensive—are stubbornly defended; "werewolf" troops are being organised on serious, para-military lines; forces are being grouped for a sacrificial stand in Emden, Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel; above all, Holland is garrisoned by 100,000 soldiers, stiffened by desperate Dutch S.S. units, under orders to deny Rotterdam and Amsterdam to the Allies at all costs, even if every sea-dyke has to be breached. Should the Netherlands be given over to protracted amphibious warfare, the fate of the Dutch population will be too terrible to contemplate. If enough German soldiers are still willing to die in furtherance of Hitler's Götterdämmerung conception of defeat, it may be too late now to save Holland from catastrophe. But here, we should have thought, is a real opportunity for political warfare, circumscribed though its operations may be by the "unconditional surrender" formula. It might surely be emphasised by leaflet and radio that the destruction of the ports at the mouths of the Rhine, Weser and Elbe will ultimately be paid for by the German people—cut off, as they thus will be, from access to seaborne supplies. Too little has yet been done by Anglo-American propaganda to appeal to the German people to refuse to aid and abet their self-immolation in a romantic Wagnerian twilight, with the Führer making his last stand in a Redoubt ringed by blazing cities.

Hopes, however, that the Redoubt may at least be shorn of Bohemia are encouraged by the Russian capture of Vienna. If the Red Army can succeed in advancing up the Danube to Linz and Passau, it should link up with General Patch's troops in the area of Regensburg. Czechoslovakia may prove to be more fortunate than Holland. Meanwhile, military considerations apart, it is plain that the Russians have decided views on the political future of Austria "liberated" by Marshal Tolbukhin's exertions. So far as can be judged from the line taken by *Pravda* and Moscow radio, U.S.S.R. policy is to adhere to the letter of the Moscow Declaration in which all the Allies promised Austria "independence." Resistance in Austria is being given credit for even more than its real military value, and Yugoslav claims to strips of Austrian territory are being severely discouraged. "Independence," however, is construed strictly in terms of severance of all links, economic and cultural, with Germany; Austrian democrats who favoured union with the Weimar Republic are dubbed indiscriminately, and quite unfairly, "Pan-Germans"; and Moscow is already making it plain that, though Austria is recognised as being a predominantly Catholic country (in which, incidentally, Communism is handicapped by its identification in the past with unpopular pro-Semitism), no Ultramontane brand of Catholicism, looking to a federation of Catholic States under the Vatican's ægis, will be tolerated.

We have yet to learn whether Marshal Tolbukhin will be instructed to form immediately a Provisional Austrian Government. The Russians are likely to insist on reviving the democratic Constitution abrogated in 1934, but, as Austria is to have a Tripartite Occupation, Washington and London will doubtless be consulted before an Austrian administration is formed. We welcome the promptness with which the Russians have invited British and American correspondents to Vienna, and trust that they will speedily be followed by Missions charged with the task of collaborating whole-heartedly with the Russians in the settlement and reconstruction of Austria. Vienna, with its fine Socialist and anti-Fascist record, may yet have a big part to play as the cultural centre of South-East Europe or even (it may be) as the seat of a European Division of the World Council. Here, more readily than anywhere, can a pioneering start be made in the international integration of rail, river and power systems in the Danube valley. It is on progress in that direction that the future peace and prosperity of the Continent will depend when the guns are silent. Vienna will provide a crucial test of the ability and willingness of the Big Three to work practically in unison.

The Fall of Plastiras

The Plastiras Cabinet had been tottering for several weeks, but its fall was due to an ancient indiscretion of its Premier. The General could not survive the publication of a letter, written in 1941, in which he recounted his efforts to secure German mediation to bring the Graeco-Italian conflict to an end. His successor, Admiral Voulgaris, is the Royalist sailor who suppressed the revolt of the Greek Navy in Egyptian waters with British aid. His "non-political" Cabinet of eight men includes five professors, a banker and a second Admiral. It is said to be evenly balanced between four Royalists and four Republicans, but it is clear from the jubilation of the "Populist" Right and the anger of the Left that few Greeks expect it to act impartially. Apart from the use of terrorist tactics and the purge in the Church and the universities that led to the dismissal of Professor Svolos and the two bishops who supported E.A.M., the Right relies chiefly on the economic needs of Greece to bring back the King when a plebiscite is taken. Greece cannot recover from its ruins without generous foreign aid, and this (so runs the argument) the British will give only to a restored monarchy. We hope that Mr. Eden's emphatic assurance in the House of Commons on March 28th that British relief would not be affected by the result of the plebiscite or of the general elections has been widely